

President's Column

UP AND RUNNING



Dr. Louis Dubé

Last September, your team of CDA representatives was elected under a whole new electoral system. Since then, we can truly say that every province is represented on our Board of Directors. Each director will bring to the table issues, concerns and ideas from a local, regional or national perspective. On the other hand, it is well understood that when a decision has to be made, it will be from the perspective of the Association — that is, from a national perspective.

In the next few weeks, one of the major tasks of CDA's new Board will be to re-examine the committee structure, in order to synchronize input to the decision-making process. Over the years, our committee members or experts were often "tagged" to a certain committee and could not be used to their full potential. Our new

format and structure will address these problems: participants will be able to work to their full potential in a cost-effective manner.

A knowledge-based governance model will better serve the interests of CDA members. New standing committees will be developed and a bank of expert advisors set up. When a "hot button" issue comes up or when the General Assembly mandates that action be taken, the Association's Board of Directors will be able to set up a task force or working group comprising the best experts, who will in due course come up with a solution. This means that whoever is best suited for a particular job will be used; nothing will prevent an expert from working on several important or time-sensitive issues covered by different committees. Once a working group's mandate is fulfilled, the experts' names will remain in our data bank until a new mandate is issued. This structure will permit CDA to respond rapidly and effectively to emerging and fast-breaking issues, while also ensuring that funds are always spent judiciously.

At the last CDA Board meeting in North Hatley, Quebec, we set up a working group mandated to start the process of organizing this structure. It will also consider appointing liaisons for each corporate member. This would allow 2-way communication and ensure that national and provincial issues are dealt with rapidly and effectively.

Knowledge-based decisions imply that 4 critical questions must be asked before any action is attempted: 1. Is this in our mandate? 2. Do our members need it? 3. What is already available out there on this issue? 4. What are the ethical aspects involved? All our decisions at CDA are based on these 4 questions; this approach allows us to be more

responsive and accountable to our members, whether corporate or individual. One other important activity at our planning session was to do an orientation session for the Board members. Some had been recently elected for the first time and we need to have everybody at the same level of understanding if we want to make informed decisions. The outcomes of this session will be to shape the different task forces and working groups needed to find solutions to issues and initiate the process for establishing next year's budget.

CDA is equipped, like never before, to deal with issues in a way demanded by the fast-paced world of today. I can hear many of you asking the question — "How will all this affect me in my dental practice?" The answer: "In many ways." First and foremost will be our ability to react even faster to the threats that our profession has to deal with. When issues like the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA)*, the Society of Composers, Authors and Music Publishers of Canada (SOCAN) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) hit CDA's radar screen, a task force can be assembled to quickly prepare a strategy or a response. Then, with communication vehicles such as *CDAalert*, CDA members will be notified about these developments almost instantly.

CDA is also raising its media profile to ensure that the point of view of the Canadian dentist is made known across the land, in keeping with our vision: "Leadership in oral health care for Canadians: Ethical and contemporary, caring and responsive."

À la prochaine.

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