



Dr. Bernard Dolansky

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The \$10-Million Transformation

The Dentistry Canada Fund (DCF), a proud part of the CDA family, is the Canadian charity for oral health. Yes, in dentistry we have our own charity. And if charity truly begins at home, then this is a cause that every dentist should support.

As president and chair of DCF, I have had many opportunities to reflect upon the challenges of fundraising in this wonderful profession of ours. As one wag put it, the problem with raising funds in the dental profession and the dental industry is that “there are many deep pockets but there are also many short arms.”

In the fundraising world, the best way to help lengthen these arms is to have a story to tell that resonates with your audience. We have a compelling story that will transform dentistry’s role as a dynamic catalyst for change.

Those of us involved in the delivery of oral health care know that our growing population of seniors is the most vulnerable to the ravages of oral disease and is also the least likely to have the resources to obtain treatment.

We are also aware of the growing body of evidence about the links between oral health and systemic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and others. As well, we have all seen cases of pain and suffering from edentulism, poorly fitting prostheses, infection and the inability to eat or communicate optimally. There is a dearth of resources to adequately research these diseases and their links, to adequately reach out and offer care, and to adequately raise public awareness and knowledge about the benefits of oral health.

At DCF, we are calling this oral-systemic link the “silent epidemic of oral disease” and have launched an “Oral Health – Good for Life” campaign to address it. In the next 4 years, this profession is going to raise \$10 million to combat this silent epidemic. Our \$10 million

will produce a return of \$500,000 every year specifically directed to research, delivery of care and education.

Funds of this magnitude will truly transform what our profession can accomplish. It will make us meaningful players when we come to the table to talk to governments; it will benefit our faculties where the majority of research takes place; and most importantly, it will give us the leverage to make sure that effective measures are put in place. If we don’t address this problem, then who will?

We have many partners in this effort, including support from the dental industry and encouragement from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, who are actively supporting the “Oral Health – Good for Life” campaign. It is also exciting to note that this initiative is starting to resonate within our profession, as more than \$1 million has already been pledged through leadership gifts from our dental and industry colleagues.

But leadership in this campaign must come from within, from each of us as individual professionals. And this campaign has great leadership, with an outstanding team of volunteer leaders, both dentists and industry people, right across Canada. When they approach you, please be generous with your time and money.

CDA has been an active supporter of the campaign, demonstrated in part by providing space for the campaign in every edition of *JCDA*. I urge you to read this material, to learn more about our story. You can also get more information from the DCF website (www.dcf-fdc.ca).

With over 85,000 registered charities in Canada, there is certainly no shortage of worthy causes, and as dentists, we are frequently asked to give by many of these charities. However, DCF and the “Oral Health – Good for Life” campaign is ‘our charity.’ Dentistry is where we spend our professional lives and for most of us, dentistry has given us lives that have been rewarding and fulfilling. I’m asking you to consider giving something back.

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