



Dr. Deborah Stymiest

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A New Direction for CDA

How do I express in so little space what an incredible year this has been? A year of managing change and setting a new direction; a year of historical meetings, respectful discussions and consultations that have led to consensus on some brave decisions. Most recently, and quite likely most notably, an agreement in principle to adopt a new membership and governance model for CDA, which if embraced, will result in a more united and collaborative Canadian dental community.

The proposed new membership model would effectively combine dentists' individual membership in both their national and provincial associations across the country. The new model is designed to avoid duplication of services while enabling everyone to benefit from economies of scale. The exact roles and responsibilities of each association will be further clarified, with the goal of delivering programs and services to dentists in a more effective and efficient manner. The proposed new governance model is designed to create a more cost-effective decision-making process, one that is knowledge-based and more responsive to the needs of CDA members. With this new model, we hope to multiply our successes and strengthen the profession as a whole.

At CDA's upcoming annual general meeting in April, the voting members will give consideration to the proposed model and determine the next steps for implementation. Given the positive sentiment across the country, I believe we will move forward with full approval in principle of the new model.

I have written previously about the new strategic direction of CDA, the realignment of the organization and the establishment of clear priorities. The focus on a strong profession, a united community and a healthy public helps define CDA, with knowledge and advocacy as our hallmarks. Rest assured that your national

association, working in concert with the provinces, is well positioned to address any challenges facing the profession on your behalf.

Yet serving as CDA president is as much about the people as the issues. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to just a few of the many people who helped me during my tenure as president. From my very first day, Mr. Joel Neal has offered his support, first as acting executive director of CDA and now as chief financial officer. When Mr. Claude Paul Boivin joined CDA in June as the new executive director, he was immediately able to step into his new role with skill and confidence. These 2 gentlemen have been a tremendous source of knowledge and strength for me.

Working with members of CDA senior staff gave me an opportunity to collaborate with what I think are some of the highest calibre managers of any organization in this country. Truly dedicated to the advancement of the Canadian dental profession, they were always there to advise and support me. Similarly, all staff at CDA displayed a strong level of commitment to serving the profession during a year of significant change.

Also, I could never fully capture in words the fondness and respect that I have for my fellow members of the CDA Board of Directors. As a profession, we should be proud to be served by some of the brightest minds and the most committed volunteers in organized dentistry.

Most importantly, I would like to thank all of you who welcomed me with such warmth and hospitality as I crossed this incredible country. I want to let you know how much I enjoyed meeting you, sharing your positive ideas and embracing your hope for the future of the profession.

I hope that by now you can feel my passion and understand that being a dentist is not just what I do, but who I am. The next chapter in the history of organized dentistry in Canada promises to be an exciting one. I am confident that we will continue to be a proud profession that builds on its amazing accomplishments and looks forward with optimism. It has truly been an honour to serve as your president.

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