



Dr. Don Friedlander

“CDA is dedicated to serving the profession as Canadian dentistry's trusted knowledge intermediary.”

Knowledge for the Profession

At CDA we continue to concentrate our efforts on 3 clear, effective and results-oriented strategic priorities. We will build a stronger profession, nurture a more united community and support a healthier public. We will achieve these goals by focusing our activities on knowledge and advocacy. My previous column focused on our advocacy efforts; this month, I would like to speak about knowledge.

Knowledge can be defined as the state of being aware or informed and as having a clear understanding of the facts or truth. Knowledge can provide us with recognition (know-what), understanding (know-why) and the capacity to act (know-how). So, knowledge is not simply a large amount of facts and data. Rather, it is information placed into context to give it added value and meaning.

CDA is dedicated to serving the profession as Canadian dentistry's trusted knowledge intermediary. This means that we will focus on collecting, filtering, analyzing, managing and disseminating critical knowledge to our members, enabling the profession to respond effectively to current issues and future challenges.

With the explosion of information technologies and increased use of the Internet, CDA's partners are increasingly expecting information quickly. However, it is only when data are organized into meaningful patterns within a proper context that valuable information is revealed. And when experience and meaning are added to this information, knowledge begins to emerge. Leveraging this knowledge and experience into thoughtful reflection and informed judgment gives the profession the insight it needs to make the right decisions.

Good examples of this level of thoughtful research and analysis can be found within various CDA committees. For instance, CDA's Clinical and Scientific Affairs Committee consists of

dentists and subject-matter experts who volunteer their time to capture, research and analyze scientific data on behalf of the Canadian dental profession. By organizing the acquisition of information and the creation of knowledge within this committee structure, CDA allows this process to occur in a thorough and systematic manner.

CDA also acts as a knowledge intermediary to facilitate consensus on the issues that directly affect the profession. Launched by CDA as a tool for our corporate members, the Dental Issues Group (DIG) is a collective knowledge project currently compiling a database of relevant position statements, research, media reports and proposed responses on important issues such as access to care, infection control and dental human resources. By coordinating our information-gathering efforts in this way, CDA is enabling the profession to speak with one voice on vital oral health matters.

Other ongoing knowledge-related activities at CDA include monitoring the current dental environment and assessing risks and opportunities. We organize and convene consultative forums on dental issues, such as seniors' oral health and dental education. We attend political and scientific conferences, and we monitor research and maintain relationships with leaders in external groups related to the profession. A key vehicle for the dissemination of our professional knowledge is *JCDA*, our national dental journal.

An essential component of the future success of CDA as an intelligent association is to continually improve the level of communication and collaboration among our members. Our profession's success depends on the ability of CDA, our member provincial associations, and other partners and stakeholders to come together and share the collective knowledge that can benefit the dental profession as a whole.

The new CDA is dedicated to perfecting the skills necessary to capture, analyze and disseminate knowledge, as well as looking for new ways to use existing knowledge to develop insight into the issues of today and tomorrow. We will achieve our 3 strategic priorities by sharing this insight with our members and with our network of partners for the continued benefit of the profession.

Don A. Friedlander, BSc, DDS
president@cda-adc.ca