

that the delay was with AHS and they were still waiting for some clarification on training. The AADA then emailed the Health Services Association of Alberta (AHS employee association) to find out where the delay was coming from. The HSAA President was very helpful and agreed to speak to the head of AHS about our concern.

January 2021: The AADA contacted the acting Director of the Health Profession Regulation Unit Kyle Duplessis to find out whether there was any provision restricting the College from approving and authorizing Alberta RDAs to perform Nasopharangeal swabs for Covid testing. We also wanted to know if the process for Title change had to come to government from the College or whether the AADA could request that change. He indicated that normally the request would come from the College.

January 2021: The AADA contacted the Opposition Health Critic David Shepherd by email asking for his support for oral healthcare professionals to receive priority vaccinations and to assist us in addressing the issue of NP Swabbing by RDAs employed by Alberta Health Services. Our first written response received was a long and disappointing "form" letter. We pursued the matter and received an invitation to a Zoom meeting with Mr. Shepherd. While he was supportive of our situation with respect to vaccinations there was nothing he could do to help us with that issue. In the situation of the NP swab authorizations for RDAs he assured us that our College could make that happen although we had been waiting since the end of October 2020 for AHS and CADA to coordinate and bring that to a conclusion. After many phone calls and emails we were finally able to inform our RDAs that the matter was settled and they were able to proceed with their training and temporary authorization from the College to perform the NP swabs.

January 2021: The AADA Corporate Agent met virtually with the Registrar of the College of Alberta Dental Assistants to discuss issues of concern with respect to the NP Swab authorization and about the possibility of forming a working group between our two organizations to address amendments to the Dental Assistant Regulations which the government would be moving into the Health Professions Act within the next 18 months. The AADA followed up with a formal letter to the CADA Council in March 2021 suggesting a working group be formed to address member concerns in several areas of the regulations.

March 2021: The AADA conducted 2 polls in March of 2021 to obtain feedback from our members on the following issues:

Wages and benefits 1 yr into pandemic: With many dental practices experiencing changes in patient load since March of 2020, the AADA was interested in what impact this had on wages and benefits for RDAs in our province. The results were:

Wages and Benefits stayed the same – 73% of respondents

Wages have been reduced over the past year – 11% of respondents

Benefits have been reduced over the past year – 5% of respondents

Wages and Benefits have increased over the past year – 10% of respondents

Expected to work longer with no pay for extra time – 1% of respondents

Professional Title preference: Respect and recognition for the scope of practice of RDAs in Alberta has been an ongoing issue for our membership. The AADA was interested in whether a change in professional title would help increase that respect and recognition. Our counterparts in the UK are called

Dental Nurses. Our counterparts in the military are called Dental Technicians. We asked whether RDAs would be interested in seeing a change in title or would like to remain as RDA. The results were:

- Registered Dental Assistant – 21% of respondents
- Registered Dental Nurse – 74% of respondents
- Registered Oral Health Nurse – 4% of respondents
- Registered Oral Health Therapist – 1% of respondents
- Registered Oral Health Technician – 0% of respondents

The AADA is committed to pursue the following goals in the 2021-2022 term:

1. Return the provision of Malpractice Liability Insurance in Alberta to the professional associations, and more specifically to provide it through the CDN DAA as was done prior to 2014.

2. Continue to address HPA concerns with government, including:

Language used in the HPA can confuse when the term member is used (connotation relates to membership associations). We promote a change to the more relevant designation of "Registrant".

Accountability to "Registrants" is lacking when there is no requirement in the HPA for Colleges to hold AGMs, for Colleges to readily accommodate "Registrants" as observers at Council meetings and Hearings.

We advocate for transparency to "Registrants" and provision of a simple process for pre-registration to attend College meetings and Hearings, easily accessible dates of these meetings and hearings, and ability for "Registrants" to contact Council members directly.

We advocate for restrictions on role of a College to preclude them from conducting the business of an Association. This would include provision of professional development, benefits, services and any other traditional provisions of an association.

We advocate for a declaration precluding a College from provision of PLI as a conflict of interest to their role in disciplining their "Registrants".

We advocate for provisions in the HPA to allow us to change the title of our profession to "Dental Nurses". This is a commonly used title in other commonwealth countries and more accurately reflects the current training requirements and scope of practice of our profession in Alberta. It will more readily support the argument for expansion of our scope of practice into areas of direct patient treatment and unsupervised practice of licensed activities for our profession.

3. Continue to Develop and conduct surveys of RDAs in AB to update our stats on workplace injuries and illnesses, to determine how RDAs are obtaining their professional development, to ask questions about continuing competency requirements and determine priorities for AADA to address the concerns of AB RDAs.

4. Continue to advocate for WCB coverage for dental staff in Alberta. AADA will follow up with the Minister of Labour and monitor government actions in changes to WCB. AADA will also pursue support from the Executive Director of Occupational Health and Safety Policy and Program Development for WCB for dental staff. This is a follow up to our meeting with OHS on May 11, 2018 when we discussed issues brought forward by RDAs about safety concerns in the dental workplace, a need to identify a process for industry assessment of hazards, and to clarify a process for reporting when there is no WCB in place at a dental workplace.

5. **Meet with ADA&C** to discuss issues brought forward by RDAs about employer conduct and determine what steps can be taken to improve the work environment for dental staff. We will use the survey results obtained from the CDN DAA surveys conducted in November 2018 and March 2019 to inform our discussions.

6. **Renew our OM agreement with the CDN DAA** for a 3 year term from June 1, 2021 to June 1, 2024 with the goal of increasing supporting membership from AB RDAs and promoting the benefits of the results of work done by the CDN DAA to our members and our profession as a whole.

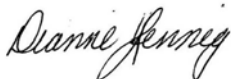
The AADA is pleased to have a voice for our members at the national table and we look forward to making significant contributions towards national initiatives taken on by the CDN DAA. Jane Sadler RDA is our Alberta Director to the Canadian Dental Assistants Association since October 2020. She will continue for a 3 year term to June 2023.

Our best wishes to our colleagues across Alberta for a progressive year ahead for our profession.

Submitted by:



Susanne Strueby RDA
Board Chair – Association of Alberta Dental Assistants



Dianne Hennig OSJ RDA MFR
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