

September 20, 2021: A virtual meeting was held with the AB Minister of Health Tyler Shandro, HPU Director Kyle Duplessis, and the AADA Board Chair, Vice Chair and Corporate Agent participating. Minister Shandro indicated that the government is trying to streamline the process for review and approval of requests for changes in scope of practice for the Health Colleges. There is a backlog with half of the Colleges having requests in the queue. The process is lengthy and begins with preparation of research and analysis, studies and documents including labour mobility issues and review of the national landscape for the profession as a whole.

The Minister suggested that where there are conflicts between the College and Associations there could be change through placing candidates on Council who are sympathetic to the associations. There are no plans to “appoint” profession Council members. The choice of appointment or election would be up to the College and in their Bylaws. We noted that the College was discussing this issue at that time. There is no help from government other than allowing submissions directly to the Minister for amendments.

The next steps for the AADA would be to consult with members on what they are willing to do to move these issues forward. Are the members happy with things the way they are or do they want to see the profession advance? If so, they need to fund the project of a Research & Analysis paper (\$) in order for our profession to move forward on getting these changes. We need to remember also that it is a long process for government to make changes and could be several years before the legislation is actually changed. Even more reason to start now or we will be even farther behind.

September 30, 2021: An email was sent to CADA asking whether Council would be discussing or considering mandatory Covid-19 vaccinations for RDAs as a requirement for licensure/practice permits. The response received was that vaccinations were not currently mandatory for RDAs however, this would be an ongoing discussion by Council and any emergent changes would be communicated as they occurred. AADA conducted a poll earlier in the month of our FB Group members which prompted this correspondence.

October 7, 2021: The AADA Corporate Agent emailed and spoke virtually with Louise Bahry, the consultant that was hired by ADA&C to do a survey and prepare a report on the perceived shortage of RDAs in Alberta. We conveyed to her the results of the CDN DAA studies undertaken in 2019 and 2020 titled: Factors Realities Experiences of Employment as a DA in Canada Survey and the Healthy and Respectful Workplace Survey. We conveyed that the AADA has attempted over the past few years to connect with the ADA&C to discuss workplace issues however they were not willing to do so as labour issues are not within the scope of a College and they have not yet created their association as a separate entity. We suggested that employers come to the organization that represents their dental assistants to open dialogue and work together with us to address workplace issues that are contributing to individuals leaving the profession shortly after training. The number of graduates being increased will not improve the ability of employers to find suitable staff when the underlying reasons for attrition are not honestly addressed. We further suggested that the solution must be found in collaboration with the profession of dental assisting and not apart from the profession if the solution is to be successful.

October 8, 2021: The AADA sent a congratulatory message to the new provincial association for Dental Hygienists in Alberta in care of Candice Boyce co-Executive Director of the DHAA.

November 10, 2021: The AADA Corporate Agent met virtually with CADA Registrar Jennifer Tewes to identify potential areas of collaboration/cooperation between CADA and AADA. Topics discussed included:

IPC document for 4/5 oral health professions excluding ADA&C and impact on RDAs. Jennifer stated this document will be “guidelines” and not standards for RDAs. Denturists adopting as standards.

Bill 45 & PLI will be discussed at the November and January Council meetings where they will address areas that could be provided by existing organizations where applicable and appropriate.

Strong Professional Associations are required and important to the profession and to public safety.

Concerns about graduating numbers increasing. Alberta Advanced Education approved programs and CADA has no control over the numbers of graduates entering the market. This might be something AADA could approach Alberta Advanced Education about to discuss parameters around what would constitute “flooding the marketplace” and the potential detriments to the profession.

Collaboration/Cooperation between CADA and AADA. The Registrar indicated she will think about what type of opportunities there might be for future joint projects.

November 19, 2021: The AADA contacted the CDN DAA by email in response to their request for topics of relevance to discuss at the Quarterly Provincial/National calls. Our suggestions for possible topics were: Change of Title (there appears to be an appetite for a change of title to Dental Nurse), Potential for an Individual/OM Hybrid membership model, Regulation and Standardizing Scope of Practice across Canada, and Maximizing beneficial change at the provincial legislative level (to help provincial associations navigate the ins and out of how to make changes for the profession and advocate for the profession with provincial government).

November 29, 2021: A motion was passed at the CADA Council meeting on November 28, 2021 which read: "That Council support the proposed next steps for the PLI policy held by the College of AB Dental Assistants, as presented and effective November 27, 2021." AADA emailed the CADA Registrar to ask what this Motion meant and the response we received was that she couldn't share any information at that time.

November 30, 2021: The AADA Corporate Agent met by Zoom with the co-Executive Director of the Dental Hygiene Association of Alberta DHAA Candice Boyce RDH. The purpose of this call was to establish a strong relationship with the DHAA and to discuss opportunities for joint projects/initiatives/etc. The DHAA has done very well with offering membership along with PLI attached and has 1/3 of the AB RDHs as members in their first year of operation. We look forward to building a strong relationship between the DHAA and the AADA as we look for ways to work together to advance the interests of oral health professionals, advocate for our professions with government, and support each other in whatever ways are possible.

December 14, 2021: In response to the ADA&C announcement re: CDSPI no longer being the provider of insurance for AB dentists, Dr. Jennifer Graas (a Calgary dentist) posted a petition asking government to address concerns with the new Professional Liability Insurance Program being forcibly mandated by the ADA&C. The ADA&C imposed an obligatory subscription to this program under the threat of non-issuance of 2022 licensure and Practice Permits. The petitioners argue that this program was implemented without adequate consultation and far too close to the registration/license renewal deadline for 2022. The AADA has been attempting to contact Dr. Graas by email and by phone since that time to offer our support, however we have not been successful in connecting with her as of the date of this report.

January 16, 2022: Emails were sent to the Canadian Minister of Health Honorable Jean-Yves Duclos and the Alberta Minister of Health Honorable Jason Copping asking for recognition of National Dental Assistants Week to be held March 6-12th, 2022. The message that AADA conveyed to both ministers was that:

"Dental Assistants are essential providers in the delivery of oral health care and they contribute to the overall health of Albertans and to citizens across our country. Throughout the SARS CoV2 pandemic, our professional members have continued to ensure that Albertans and Canadians receive safe, competent, and necessary dental treatment. Without Dental Assistants taking on the responsibility of front line health care workers in the dental setting, this care could not have continued."

March 3, 2022: A notice was sent to AB RDAs by the CADA announcing they were holding a virtual Leadership Workshop on Saturday April 2, 2022. The AADA AGM had been scheduled well in advance for the same date. The AADA emailed the CADA to advise them that double booking of events/meetings would prevent those who wished to attend both from doing so. It was further requested that CADA check the AADA provincial calendar of events on the AADA website to try to avoid double bookings in future.

March 14, 2022: The AADA Board Chair and AADA Corporate Agent met with CADA Registrar Jennifer Tewes by Zoom in response to an email received from Ms. Tewes on March 9, 2022. We were advised that a notice re: PLI for 2023 would be published on the CADA website and an email sent to AB registrants early this week. AADA was asked if there was any particular message wording we wanted to provide for inclusion in the website FAQ and to submit it that day. The AADA did submit our request however it was not included as the CADA Communication team had already uploaded the website information that day ahead of our submission.

AADA POLLS

September 2021 Mandatory Vaccination for HCPs: Many healthcare organizations are supporting mandatory vaccination/testing for healthcare providers, especially as they provide services to vulnerable populations. Vaccinations for diseases over the years have reduced the ability of that disease to spread and have reduced the ability to cause infection in unvaccinated silos of the general population. This is called creating "herd immunity". Do you support mandatory vaccination/testing for healthcare workers (that includes oral healthcare) to support public health measures meant to reduce the ability of SARS CoV2 to spread and to protect those vulnerable populations who cannot get the vaccine or for whom the vaccine provides limited protection? The results were:

- Yes – 66% of respondents
- No – 31% of respondents
- Undecided – 3% of respondents

Update on March 2021 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 – 20% of respondents

Registered Dental Nurse – 75% of respondents
Registered Oral Health Nurse – 4% of respondents
Registered Oral Health Therapist – 1% of respondents
Registered Oral Health Technician – 0% of respondents

GOALS MET in 2021-2022

The AADA committed to pursue the following goals in the 2021-2022 term and these goals were achieved:

We advocated for a declaration precluding a College from provision of PLI as a conflict of interest to their role in disciplining their "Registrants". BILL 46 addressed this issue by requiring the Colleges to cease offering services that could be provided by other organizations or businesses.

We renewed our OM agreement with the CDN DAA for another 2 year period ending June 2023.

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.

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On March 14, 2022 the CADA notified their registrants on their website and subsequently by email, that effective for the 2023 Practice Permit renewal the College would not be including PLI with the annual Practice Permit fee. Registrants were advised that they were expected to find their own PLI through an individual policy or a group policy that met the requirements as outlined by the College. The College chose against providing a smooth transition to provision of PLI through collaboration directly with the associations and instead simply advised registrants to do their own research and to contact ProLink or their association directly.

2. 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.

On June 12, 2021, the CDN DAA approved a 2 year extension of the AADA's OM agreement based on the same criteria as previously. AADA is expected to encourage and promote national membership to increase the number of AB RDAs who support and are represented at CDN DAA. The current agreement will be reviewed for renewal at the CDN DAA AGM in June 2023.

GOALS for 2022-2023

The AADA is committed to pursue the following goals in the upcoming term:

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

Language used in the HPA does confuse many people when the term "member" is used in this legislation (connotation relates to membership associations). We will continue to advocate for a change in language in the HPA 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, and allowing Colleges to forego elections to Council in lieu of appointments. We will continue to advocate for compulsory AGMs and election of Registrants in good standing to the College Council.

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

We will continue to advocate for restrictions on the 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 will continue to 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.

2. 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.

3. Continue to advocate for WCB coverage for dental staff in Alberta. Our correspondence in 2021/22 was not responded to by the AB Labour Minister Coping nor the next Minister Shandro. AADA will follow up in 2022 with the newest Minister of Labour Kasey Madu, 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. With the changing Ministerial portfolios and changes in governments, this process is not going to be quick or easy, however we will achieve this goal with ongoing pursuit and persistence.

4. Meet with the new provincial Association for Dentists 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. Currently, the ADA&C is in the process of separating their College from their Association and this process is anticipated to be completed by the end of 2023. It is unlikely that we will get a meeting until the separation is completed at which time we will need to meet with the Association not the College.

5. Establish an AB Dental Assistant Schools Advisory Group to provide AADA with information about trends in DA education, suggestions and support for involving students in association business, and for ensuring the students are informed about the importance and value of tri-level professional associations.

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 in her 3 year term to June 2023.

Our best wishes to our colleagues across Alberta and across Canada 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
AADA Corporate Agent