



Association of Alberta Dental Assistants  
Annual Activities Report  
October 3, 2020

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and social distancing and group limits in Alberta the AADA has postponed our 8<sup>th</sup> AGM to Saturday October 3, 2020. The current Board of Directors agreed to remain in their positions for an additional 6 months until the Election is held in October. The officers of the 2019-2020 AADA Board are:

*Chairman of the Board* Maeghan Heck RDA  
*Vice Chair* Susanne Strueby RDA  
*Past Chair* Jane Sadler RDA  
*Treasurer* Danelle Fulawka RDA  
*Directors at Large:* Geri Moir RDA, Kimberly Free RDA, Arlene Pettifer RDA,  
Karen Allan RDA, Vicky Tatoulis RDA, Patricia Hillton RDA.

In the 2019-2020 term, the Association of Alberta Dental Assistants connected with several individuals, organizations and government to advance our profession and our association. These meetings and presentations included:

**June 2019:** Three AADA surveys were conducted on the following topics:

*The Importance of Professional Associations for Dental Assistants*

*Professional Development*

*Workplace Injuries*

The results are posted on our website and will help determine priorities for AADA to address the concerns of Alberta RDAs.

**July 30, 2019:** In order for us to reach out to AB RDAs that we had no other way to connect with the AADA launched an AADA Facebook page. The AADA has been promoting tri-level membership on this page and has had many opportunities to share information from the CDN DAA that shows how we all need to work together and support the initiatives that are being addressed on behalf of the profession as a whole.

**September 13, 2019:** At the request of the CADA Council, the AADA made a presentation at their Council meeting to provide them with more information about our association. The presentation included: who we are, what we do, why we do what we do, our vision, mission and values, our society partners, our affiliations, our funding, our administration, our organizational business, our work in advocacy, our advocacy goals, and how CADA could collaborate with AADA and an invitation to work with us for the benefit of the profession in Alberta. The CADA Council thanked us for the presentation however they did not follow up with us as of today with regard to our invitation to work with us.

**October 23, 2019:** Elections in the fall resulted in a change in government to a new party leading Alberta. The AADA requested a meeting with the new Alberta Health Minister the Honorable Tyler Shandro. Our goal was to bring our profession to his attention and to inform him of the major legislative issues affecting our professional members. The Minister declined our request to meet and referred us to meet with his Senior Staff at Alberta Health in January 2020. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic we have not yet been able to schedule a meeting.

**January 29, 2020:** Meeting with CADA Registrar Jennifer Tewes. We discussed the following: Change of title before regulations are up for review; the 3 CDN DAA surveys; Support for professional membership associations and returning to an hours per year of CE rather than 2 learning objectives to encourage memberships; Impact of the Cayden Report on Health Colleges on all regulatory colleges across Canada; Opportunities for collaboration between CADA and AADA; RDA's in Long Term Care; Provision of PLI by a few regulatory Colleges in Alberta with majority offered through associations; Instilling the true meaning of professionalism in students; Having professional association representation on the College council; Issues with ADA&C and hiring non-RDA's to perform all but a few restricted duties; Why are RDA's the only dental professional requiring "supervision" to provide services they are trained and registered to provide?

**March 21, 2020:** As the COVID-19 pandemic shut down dental practices in this province we created a private group page for licensed AB RDAs only. We use this page to provide exclusive information and to increase awareness of the value of professional associations. Requests to join the group page grew quickly and within a few weeks we were attracting RDAs from all over Alberta to participate in the business of advocacy for our profession. We posted polls to track the effect of Covid-19 on our professional member practice both for awareness and for the AADA to use as data.

**April 9, 2020:** A letter was sent to the College of Alberta Dental Assistants requesting consideration of a reduction or elimination of the 2021 license fee if the majority of RDAs are not back to work by September 2020. The CADA declined our request.

**May 12, 2020:** A letter was sent to the Alberta Dental Association and College and copied to the College of Alberta Dental Assistants and College of Registered Dental Hygienists of Alberta, advising them of our members concerns with the Covid-19 Guidelines that they adopted for re-opening dental offices in Alberta. We included the recommendations we were making to our members and asked for their serious consideration of our concerns. The ADA&C response was that their members were not profit driven in their implementation of guidelines and they did not feel that any amendments to their guidelines were required at that time.

**May 15, 2020:** A phone call was made to the Alberta Dental Association and College to clarify and confirm our interpretation of their return to full practice guidelines titled Expectations and Pathway for Patient Care during the Covid-19 Pandemic. We were able to provide some suggestions for areas that could use clarification and we were advised that our comments were to be forwarded to the ADA&C committee that wrote the guidelines for their consideration.

**May 27, 2020:** A letter was sent to the Honorable Tyler Shandro, Alberta Minister of Health conveying the difficulties RDAs were having in working with other oral health professionals in the same work setting under 3 different professional college guidelines relating to Covid 19. We indicated that this was an issue of public and staff safety. The Minister and the Chief Medical Officer Dr. Deena Hinshaw agreed and the Colleges for dentists, dental assistants and hygienists were ordered to collaborate on a single set of guidelines for use by all 3 professions in the dental facility setting.

**May 27, 2020:** A letter was sent to the Council of the College of Alberta Dental Assistants conveying our concerns about professional associations being inadequately funded and the unequal field between protection of the public and protection for the profession. We indicated that there were 3 options that would resolve this inequality, two of which were under the control of the College and which they could change immediately: returning the PLI back to associations to provide and returning the requirement for a minimum of 10 professional development credit hours to be in line with the other 4 oral health colleges who all require a minimum number of PD hours per year for renewal of practice permits. CADA responded that they were not responsible to address and alleviate the problems of associations and would not be making any changes to PLI provision or the competency program requiring a minimum completion of 2 learning objectives per year for practice permit renewal.

**August 11, 2020:** Meeting with CADA Registrar Jennifer Tewes. At this bi-annual meeting we discussed a lot of issues that are inter-connected. The discussion centered on the recent Alberta Government discussion paper that was sent to the Colleges and select Associations related to the government proposals to amend the Health Professions Act with their stated goal of improving regulatory effectiveness and efficiency. The paper included items not related to the HPA but related to the current public health emergency with Covid-19 and to the need for improvements in long term care.

Will the Caydon Report and what is happening in BC incentivize the UCP to do the same thing within the next 3 years? The move to 50% public members on College councils is the first step. We are now partners in our regulation, not self-regulating.

We discussed the Alberta Health Services proposed amalgamation of similar colleges ie a College of Oral Health Professionals; what would happen to the CADA funds under amalgamation; what kind of representation would RDAs have on an amalgamated Council; is it appropriate to be in the same college as our employer and similar questions.

**August 21, 2020:** The AADA Board reviewed the Alberta Health Services proposed amendments to the HPA and prepared our response to each of the proposals. This was emailed back to the Health Professions Unit at Alberta Health and we are now awaiting a report on the results of the reviews from the health Colleges and associations that responded. The AADA review is available upon request to AADA members through the AADA office.

The following goals were identified for AADA to pursue in the 2020-2021 term:

- 1. Continue to work for the return of 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 Hearings, easily accessible dates of these 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 and Dental Assisting Regulations 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 conduct polls of RDAs in AB** through our AADA group Facebook page to determine how the Covid-19 pandemic is affecting our professional members as the situation continues to unfold.

**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 in addition to the results of our own surveys conducted in 2019.

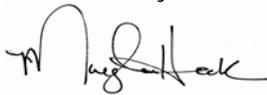
**6. Promote the importance of membership with the CDN DAA:** For the 2020 CDN DAA fiscal year the AADA has processed 141 CDN DAA membership payments to date. Memberships are now being processed for the 2021 fiscal year. The AADA will use a draw for two \$75.00 gift cards at Ur-store and auctioning a CDN DAA jacket with the goal of increasing supporting membership from AB RDAs for 2021. On June 1, 2017, the Association of Alberta Dental Assistants (AADA) was accepted as an Organizational Member of the Canadian Dental Assistants Association (CDN DAA) for a 2 year probationary period ending June 1, 2019. This was extended for an additional 2 year probationary period ending June 1, 2021. The representative that AADA has elected to serve on the Canadian Board for the next 2 terms is Jane Sadler

RDA. Jane is a founding member of the Association of Alberta Dental Assistants and as the Alberta Director on the CDN DAA Board she serves in a voting role for our organization at the national level.

Our AADA Director to the CDN DAA Board will continue to keep in touch with our CDN DAA supporting members by email no less than twice per year to advise members of the results of work done by the CDN DAA on their behalf and for our profession as a whole. AADA Board members will take advantage of Local/Provincial meetings to talk about the benefits of CDN DAA membership and encourage Alberta RDA's to add their support.

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.

Submitted by:



**Maeghan Heck RDA**  
Board Chair – Association of Alberta Dental Assistants

and



**Dianne Hennig OSTJ RDA MFR**  
Corporate Agent – Association of Alberta Dental Assistants