

The background features a large blue circle on the left containing the title. To the right of the circle is a wavy, grid-like pattern. Scattered around these elements are several wireframe geometric shapes, including dodecahedrons, icosahedrons, and tetrahedrons, all rendered in blue lines.

# MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

**2024 Spring General Council**

The ODA General Council spring meeting was held in person on May 3 and 4, 2024. This publication summarizes the events and is posted on the ODA website and emailed to the general membership.

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS



The following elections were held at this year's meeting:

Dr. Roger Howard has retired as Chair of the General Council after 26 years. Dr. David Stevenson, the current Vice-Chair, was ratified as the new Chair. Dr. Lisa Bentley was elected as Vice-Chair.

Dr. Edward Busvek (Elgin), Dr. Gordan Markic (Halton-Peel), Dr. Christine Moore (Peterborough), and Dr. Sara Worth (Temiskaming) were re-elected to the Board of Directors. Dr. Homa Jammehdiabadi (York) was newly elected to the Board.

It was announced to the Council that Dr. Janet Leith was elected as ODA Vice-President, and Dr. Lesli Hapak was re-elected as the ODA representative to the Canadian Dental Association Board of Directors.

The Government Dental Programs Working Group, in their update, shared the progress of federal and provincial advocacy, including the Canadian Dental Care Plan (CDCP) and the ongoing negotiations with the provincial government to address funding issues with its dental programs.

Dr. Ron House and Mr. Graeme Reid of House Oeconomicae presented to the Council, providing a comprehensive overview of the economics of the CDCP.



## KEY UPDATES

### ADVOCACY

#### Government Dental Programs

Last summer, the ODA took a historic step by entering confidential negotiations with the Ontario government regarding the province's dental care programs. This is a culmination of our decades of advocacy for better funding for these programs, including fair remuneration for the dentists who provide the care. We are pleased to share that the ODA and Ministry of Health have agreed, in principle, to negotiations taking place at least every four years and the availability of a mediation process. Recent discussions have been promising, focusing on opportunities to maximize the effectiveness of the CDCP for Ontarians.

The Ontario government has announced an interim approach to the co-ordination of the CDCP, Healthy Smiles Ontario (HSO), and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). Dentists providing services to patients eligible for the CDCP and either HSO or ODSP may use Ontario's programs to supplement CDCP fees up to the maximums outlined in the provincial schedules.

Since our urgent appeal to Members of Parliament last October and the release of the *Framework for the Canadian Dental Care Plan* in November 2023, Canada's provincial and territorial dental associations met repeatedly with Minister of Health Mark Holland and Health Canada officials for confidential consultations and continue to do so. We have repeatedly told the government that forcing dentists to register and sign a contract that can be changed unilaterally is the wrong approach. Patients must be able to choose their dentist, and that will only happen if dentists participate in the CDCP.

Coverage under the CDCP launched in May. Dentists are encouraged to be cautious and get all the facts to help them independently decide whether to sign up for the CDCP. On April 11, Minister Holland publicly stated that Health Canada is removing the registration requirement under the CDCP and allowing for an “alternate pathway” where providers can submit individual claims starting on July 8. We’re hopeful but need to see the details. If the alternate pathway has the same terms and conditions as under the registration requirement, it will not address our major concerns.

Our Political Contact Dentist Network campaign to engage Members of Parliament launched on April 12, in time to exert full pressure given the poor provider registration numbers and the pressure the Minister is already under to deliver. The Canadian Dental Association (CDA) and the provincial and territorial dental associations are launching a national public-facing campaign this spring to educate the public on the CDCP’s limitations and dentists’ concerns with the program and mobilize the public to pressure the government to improve the CDCP.

Our [Frequently Asked Questions page](#) for members is continually updated as more details are confirmed. Resources continue to be launched, providing members and their teams with information about participating in the CDCP and helping them communicate with patients. Members can get the latest updates on all our advocacy activities on the website at [oda.ca/advocacy](https://oda.ca/advocacy). The best public resource on the CDCP for your patients is [oda.ca/cdcp](https://oda.ca/cdcp).

### 2024 Federal Budget: Capital Gains Taxes

The federal government’s 2024 budget, *Fairness For Every Generation*, contains changes to capital gains taxes that could impact members. The changes were not included when the government introduced its budget legislation on Tuesday; however, the Minister of Finance indicated they would be introduced in separate legislation. We will continue to monitor for any further pertinent details.

The ODA continues to study the impact of the 2024 federal budget. Some of the changes in this budget have the potential to impact you personally and professionally. We strongly recommend you consult with a tax professional as soon as possible. This is because it may take some time to enact changes prior to the June 25 effective date when the capital gains inclusion rate increases.

We are actively engaged in different avenues of collaboration with the CDA and other health groups regarding the tax changes, including the Ontario Medical Association and Ontario Pharmacists Association. We are committed to necessary advocacy with our partners to protect the sustainability of dental practices. The CDA has worked with MNP, a leading Canadian accounting firm, on a technical analysis of the budget, and more resources will be released to members in the coming weeks.

### ANNUAL SPRING MEETING (ASM)

ASM24 was held on April 18 to 20, 2024, and our attendance was very strong. We had just over 11,800 attendees, which illustrates a continual progression in growth and a return to pre-pandemic numbers. The feedback has been exceptionally positive. Attendance verifications will be sent in June or July, and the Best Value Package recordings will begin on May 24 and be available throughout the summer.

Next year’s ASM takes place from May 8 to 10, 2025.

## COMPONENT SOCIETIES

ODA staff have presented two in-person town halls on the CDCP in Peterborough and Owen Sound. On April 23, a CDCP Information Session with Dr. Brock Nicolucci and Mr. Frank Bevilacqua took place in Ottawa for the eastern Ontario region. It was a free Category 2 event for members. Sessions for other regions in the province are being planned.

Each issue of *Ontario Dentist* continues to highlight component society events around the province through the Component Society Chronicles. The [cover of the December 2023](#) issue was dedicated to highlighting the Chronicles for the year. In the [April issue](#), a page will be dedicated to Oral Health Promotion (OHP) Grant activities across the province.

## INDIGENOUS ORAL HEALTH

The ODA is working to finalize an Intentionality Statement on Indigenous Oral Health.

Through our Remote Areas Program, licensed dentists, certified dental assistants, and registered dental hygienists are eligible to deliver oral health-related services and activities in the Sioux Lookout Zone. Visit the [ODA's website](#) for more details.

The ODA supports the development of a model of care and business plan for the transition of dental health services from Indigenous Services Canada to the Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority. The ODA is the sole dental and dental hygiene services provider in the Sioux Lookout Zone.

## INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL

Last July, the Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario (RCDSO) rescinded its COVID-19-specific guidance for infection prevention and control (IPAC). This decision was made in collaboration with the province's regulatory bodies and after our joint advocacy with the Ontario Dental Assistants Association. The ODA is currently reviewing all our COVID-19 and IPAC resources and guidance. We are committed to encouraging IPAC standards for dental care to be informed by evidence and to protect patients, providers, and the environment.

Councillors participated in an IPAC workshop at the interim General Council meeting in November to discuss specific requirements of the RCDSO's IPAC standard of practice that require further review from an evidence-based perspective. Staff is currently carrying out specific IPAC advocacy priorities and next steps arising from the workshop results.

The provincial government shifted to a single coordinated model for the distribution of emergency stockpiles of PPE — the [PPE Supply Portal](#) — which allows health care workers, including dentists, to order necessary and larger varieties of PPE at no cost through an integrated order-management system. The availability of N95 respirators and rapid antigen tests through ODA Supply Hub ended on March 31, 2024. Supplies will now be available to dentists through the government's PPE Supply Portal.

## MEMBER EDUCATION

More in-person continuing education events are being planned and delivered across the province. Be sure to frequently check the [Events listing](#) on the ODA website to see what's happening in your area.

We are planning several new online courses on patient communication and cybersecurity. These will be available to ODA members and their teams in the next few months.

This year's New Dentist Symposium will be held on October 26 and 27 at the Delta Toronto Hotel. Registration will open in May. More details are on [nds.oda.ca](https://nds.oda.ca).

## MEMBERSHIP VALUE

Promoting and raising awareness around existing ODA products, services, and programs is our key priority while continuing to explore new ones that support members in their profession. New and updated resources recently launched include the 2023 editions of the [ODA Economic Report to the Profession](#) and [ODA Dental Personnel Wage Report](#); the 2024 [ODA Suggested Fee Guides](#) were launched in early December; and a [CDCP member toolkit](#) was launched in February.

[ODA Supply Hub](#) (OSH) continues to expand and provide dental practices with more opportunities than ever for price-comparison shopping. More vendors, including Curion, have now been added to OSH.

The ODA advocates for its members and the dental profession, including dental specialists. That's why the ODA supported a Canada Revenue Agency HST (Harmonized Sales Tax) defence by Dr. Kevin Davis, an orthodontist and ODA member. We are happy to have lent our support to a cause that will benefit orthodontists and dentists across Canada.

## ORAL HEALTH HUMAN RESOURCES

The ODA established the Oral Health Human Resources Task Force (OHHRTF) to develop, co-ordinate, and prioritize an organization-wide plan to facilitate and support the recruitment and retention of successful dental teams in Ontario.

Current approaches to tackle this issue include conducting surveys of dentists and auxiliary staff, developing strategic partnerships with groups like the Ontario Dental Assistants Association, and identifying opportunities to advocate. For example, the ODA has formally requested the Ontario government to reduce red tape and support common sense solutions to make it easier for dental assistants and dental hygienists to practice in Ontario.

## PUBLIC EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

The Membership Services and Programs Advisory Committee (MSPAC) and the Communications team are now developing and implementing a strategy for our 2024 advertising campaign. It was determined that the campaign should focus on the importance of the dentist-patient relationship. It should aim to maintain the public's trust in dentists as knowledgeable and involved leaders who want to help make the CDCP successful.

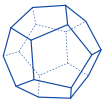
The ODA has worked collaboratively with the other provincial and territorial dental associations and the CDA on a national campaign launched in late 2023. The goal was to clarify the specific expectations of the dental profession about what the CDCP should look like ahead of its implementation. Our efforts generated more than 700 mentions in media outlets across the country. We also updated our website — [oda.ca/cdcp](https://oda.ca/cdcp) — to provide the public with a definitive source of information about the CDCP.

Further planning is underway for another national public awareness campaign this spring to educate the public on the CDCP's limitations and dentists' concerns with the program and mobilize the public to apply pressure on the government to improve the CDCP. The ODA plans to ensure clear alignment with the work of the MSPAC and national efforts.

## REGULATORY AND LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

The ODA regularly provides feedback on proposed legislation, regulations, and policy positions that could impact the profession and patients to help achieve our strategic priority of thought leadership and the ODA's role as a facilitator of oral health in Ontario. Our recent submissions include feedback on the RCDSO consultations regarding its Professional Liability Program, the Emergency Class Certificate Fees By-Law, and access to care. Volunteers lead all our submissions. Your feedback informs and shapes our submissions; we encourage you to lend your voice to any [active consultations](#).

We provide access to many useful compliance resources to help practices adhere to various regulatory requirements, including health and safety, employment, privacy and more.



## UPDATES FROM BOARD COMMITTEES

### AUDIT, FINANCE AND RISK COMMITTEE (AFRC)

#### Financial Report

January year-to-date, we are positive to budget by \$1.4 million overall. Investments and unrealized gains were \$1,495K positive to budget January year-to-date, and all other variances combined were \$95K negative to budget. The outstanding performance continued in February and March, with a further increase in investment income and unrealized gains of approximately \$0.7 million over the two months. This strong investment performance is a refreshing change following the weak years in 2021-2022 and 2022-2023.

#### 2024-2025 Budget

A budget package was approved at the March Board meeting. Budgeted revenues increased most notably in membership dues, the ASM, the Remote Areas Program (due to contracts retained by the ODA in 2023), and investment income. These higher revenues allow us to accommodate higher expenses and pass on a reasonably small two per cent dues increase, lower than the rate of inflation.

### GOVERNANCE AND NOMINATING COMMITTEE (GNC)

#### Strategic Plan

The GNC is preparing for a new strategic planning cycle, with the current Plan set to expire on May 31, 2025. The GNC will soon issue a Request for Proposal for a consultant to assist in the development of the new Plan. Part of any strategic planning process will include engaging with Councillors for feedback on goals and priorities for the ODA and the profession.

#### Non-Registered Dentists' Eligibility for Council

The GNC considered a suggestion from a Councillor at the November 2023 meeting that non-registered, retired dentists be eligible to serve as Councillors. Currently, our by-laws require that Councillors, who are the voting members of the Association, be registered with the RCDSO.

While there may be potential benefits to this — namely, more engagement by retired dentists and better representation of component societies at the meeting — the Board recommends maintaining the requirement for registration with the RCDSO. They felt that, at this time, it is extremely important that Councillors are aware of the profession's current state, given that it is so rapidly changing.

#### Mid-Term Elections

Councillors were advised of the mid-term opportunities to serve on ODA Advisory Committees. Details about all volunteer opportunities are available on the [ODA website](#). Councillors and all members are encouraged to check out the [December 2023](#) issue of *Ontario Dentist* for a full list of positions. The ODA is a member-driven, member-supported organization. As a volunteer, you will broaden your understanding of the profession beyond the dental office.

## HUMAN RESOURCES AND COMPENSATION COMMITTEE (HRCC)

### ODA Greater Toronto's Top Employer 2024

On December 5, 2023, the ODA was named one of the [GTA's Top Employers](#) for the sixth year in a row. During the most competitive year to date, being selected as one of Greater Toronto's Top Employers is an exceptional accomplishment. Being recognized as a leader in the job market allows the ODA to attract highly qualified candidates, which translates to excellent products, services, and programs to optimize the member experience.



## SUMMARY OF THE ADDRESS FROM THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF DENTAL SURGEONS OF ONTARIO (RCDSO)

Dr. Harinder Sandhu, RCDSO President, began his address by speaking about the collaboration between the RCDSO and ODA at the latter's Annual Spring Meeting in April. The RCDSO had a booth on the Exhibits Floor — for the first time in recent memory — where RCDSO Council and committee members spent time answering questions from the more than 400 attendees who came by to chat. Six members of RCDSO staff presented top-rated Category 1 courses on topics such as recordkeeping, infection prevention and control, and oral surgery and implants. These were all important ways for the RCDSO to be available to the profession as a resource.

Dr. Sandhu touched upon the topics currently shaping the profession — the Canadian Dental Care Plan, the RCDSO's governance activities, and the Professional Liability Program — and how the RCDSO connects and collaborates with the profession.

## CANADIAN DENTAL CARE PLAN (CDCP)

The CDCP can potentially close some of the gaps in access to oral health care. The RCDSO has been providing information about the program and will continue to do so. The public interest in balance billing — an appropriate focus for a regulator — will be discussed at the next RCDSO Council meeting on May 9. The discussion will involve both public and professional perspectives, but no decisions will be made.

The RCDSO is also talking to the federal government about its role in the claims-verification process. It is committed to working with Health Canada to design a sensible, coordinated, made-in-Ontario approach that will involve the RCDSO in its implementation. This approach should provide public funding accountability without being onerous.

## GOVERNANCE

The RCDSO's newly established Governance Committee has made great strides this year. The Committee's core function is to review and recommend candidates for its Council and committee positions. Recently, the Committee reviewed candidate applications for the Professional Liability Program Committee.

It also works on long-term governance issues. In 2022, the Ontario Ministry of Health circulated a policy paper on governance modernization to all the health regulatory colleges. The RCDSO Council provided feedback at the time, and now the Governance Committee is exploring possible ideas for change, including a slight reduction in the size of the Council, revisions to the election process, staggered terms, and a separation of the Council and committees. Since these ideas require further research and consultation, changes will be implemented after the 2026 election cycle.

The Council has made one change you will notice in the next 2024 election cycle: registrants' electoral districts will be added to the public register this July, allowing registrants to self-search for their electoral district. The goal is to increase transparency and efficiency during a busy election cycle.

## PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY PROGRAM (PLP)

At its December Council meeting, the RCDSO reviewed several options for divesting from direct ownership and operation of the PLP. It also considered the significant member input received during its public consultation, including a submission from the ODA. The RCDSO learned that the advisory portion of the PLP was highly valued, and the tail coverage was essential to dentists. Concerns were also raised about potential cost increases.

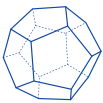
Given the input, the Council determined that the best approach would be to preserve the current value of the program during its divestment from the RCDSO. A procurement process was launched to transfer the PLP to a third party, allowing the program to continue under separate ownership. Through an RFP process, the RCDSO has selected PwC as a third-party advisor to provide advice and support during the divestment process. The Executive Committee has established a procurement review group to guide the process. For now, dentists can continue using the PLP as they always have.

## CONNECTING AND CONSULTING

Dr. Sandhu closed his address by highlighting other ways the RCDSO connects and consults with the profession.

- It holds regular RCDSO Connect sessions, which are virtual town halls that sometimes provide continuing education (CE) credits. Some recent sessions focused on the PLP and complaints and investigations. The next planned session on May 9 is on the new e-Portfolio. If you are unable to attend the sold-out session, a recording will be made available.
- The RCDSO will host its first in-person Connect session at Western University in London on June 25, 2024. The focus will be on patient-dentist relationships and access to care. More details will be shared in the coming weeks.
- The RCDSO has recently consulted with the profession and the public about access to care. It appreciates the ODA's submission and looks forward to further collaborating with the Association.

- Dentists and the public have questioned the care provided through different practice models, including corporate and direct-to-consumer dentistry. As a regulator, the RCDSO must better understand dental practice models operating in Ontario, identify issues and opportunities related to these models, and develop options to promote and assure quality of care regardless of practice model type. One of the critical steps in this project is consulting with the profession. [A survey on the RCDSO website](#) explores some of these critical questions and is available until June 9.
- Infection prevention and control plays a large part in our profession's impact on the environment. The RCDSO seeks to examine the existing standard through an environmental lens, question each requirement, seek evidence, and balance the requirements with the risk of harm. It hopes to connect and share knowledge with the ODA's Environment Sustainability Working Group.



## SUMMARY OF ADDRESS FROM THE CANADIAN DENTAL ASSOCIATION (CDA)

Dr. Joel Antel, CDA President, provided an update about the CDCP to the General Council.

He summarized the history of CDA advocacy around the national federal dental care program when it was initially announced. The program looked promising and was something the CDA advocated for — access to care for the uninsured. Because it was a federal program, the government looked to the CDA for guidance. The CDA advised them not to model the CDCP after a problematic program — namely, the Non-Insured Health Benefits program — but their warnings went unheeded. (The government did listen to the CDA's calls for a larger budget than initially planned.)

The CDA and provincial and territorial dental associations (PTDAs) united to develop a technical plan for a program that would work for patients and the government and be sustainable for dentists. From this point on, our advocacy became focused on getting the government to take what they have, apply our model, and make the program work.

Currently, the CDA and PTDAs must continue working with the government to make the CDCP more workable. However, there will come a point when we must accept the CDCP for what it is and protect the reputation of organized dentistry and its members.

In a remarkable display of unity, the CDA and PTDAs are working together in an unprecedented manner — pooling their resources and expertise to achieve common goals. The leadership of ODA is instrumental in making this process work. Dr. Antel is hopeful that the model will stay in place to deal with other issues that the profession will have to deal with in the future.