



BRIEFING NOTE

TOPIC: SUPPORT FOR THE ROYAL UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL DENTAL CLINIC

SUBMITTED TO: COLLEGE OF DENTAL SURGEONS OF SASKATCHEWAN

DATE: November 19, 2019

SUBMITTED BY: DR. M. TEEKASINGH

PURPOSE OF SUBMISSION: Information Decision/Approval

Situation:

The present delivery of dental services to vulnerable populations had been disrupted due to a lack of skilled manpower and funding. In order to continue to be able to deliver the needed dental services to these populations additional capital and highly skilled human resources are required. Without temporary financial assistance to the RUH hospital dental department there will continue to be difficulties in accessing care for these groups. This may eventually lead to increased frustration and dissatisfaction in the public, in government, with medical colleagues and the membership of CDSS. The current situation may have numerous untoward negative consequences for the dental profession.

Background:

The traditional service delivery model to these populations was abruptly changed in June of this year when difficulties were encountered in the recruitment of skilled dental residents. In the past, hospital dental services within the RUH Dental Department relied heavily on GPR Resident manpower, which is in contrast to all other medical departments within the SHA, and is not in line with the hospital dental service delivery model across the country. To add to the complexity, The College of Dentistry, who recently administered the dental residency program was unable to recruit suitable dentists to the program. The unfortunate present situation highlights the vulnerability of our current model of hospital dental care delivery, emphasizing the need for continuity of care- an expectation of both the SHA and the patients we serve.

The RUH dental clinic finds itself in a difficult situation attempting to provide dental care to those most vulnerable in our society, in a facility in disrepair, and without the funding to address these concerns. The Dental Department is committed to caring for these complex patients, and is working diligently with the SHA and stakeholders to ensure there is a vision of quality centralized dental services where continuity of care and accountability are the foundations. Consequently, both the CEO and the Chief Medical Officer (SHA) have committed to the development of a provincial wide Dental Department within the SHA, in which the RUH Dental Department will be an essential component.

Assessment:

Key stakeholders in this clinic are the Department of Dentistry, the Saskatchewan Health Authority and the College of Dental Surgeons. To ensure the public is able to access the care they need in timely manner by skilled clinicians the current situation must be resolved. The immediate problem has been escalating for almost six months. The services provided by this clinic are not limited to Saskatoon but must be considered as a provincial resource for dentists and physicians as well as allied dental personnel.

The CEO of the SHA (Mr. Scott Livingstone) has committed in writing the following:

- “The SHA will provide space and services (e.g. power, internet, water, etc....) within RUH for the dental clinic
- Only SHA credentialed practitioners will be permitted to provide service within this RUH Dental Clinic (similar to all SHA facilities)”

In August of this year, the RUH Dental Department submitted a proposed strategic plan to the SHA. They confirmed ongoing support for hospital dental services but will not commit to operational funding. SHA have also committed to re-establishing the GPR program, and the RUH Dental Department continues to work collaboratively with the SHA and the COD to ensure the development of an accredited GPR program. The next step in this process is to secure funding for essential diagnostic equipment within the RUH Dental Clinic. The current imaging equipment is no longer serviceable and uses dated analog technology. This new equipment is required for effective management of the current patient backlog. Further, it will help to re-establish the dental service and its’ reputation, help rebuild relationships with the SHA, the Ministry of Health and the College of Dentistry. Ultimately, it will ensure that the dentists of this province are able to meet the needs of the community they serve by ensuring their patients have timely access to hospital based dental services.

I ask that the CDSS consider this as a strategic investment in dentistry to meet the needs of those most vulnerable in our society. This will also signal tremendous goodwill and strengthen the relationship with government when it comes to government relations and discussions regarding continued support for the dental services provided by the RUH dental clinic. The opportunity offered to the profession to coordinate and provide a collaborative framework for provincial wide oral health care through the establishment of a SHA Department of Dentistry, can only strengthen the care we can provide to the public. I thank the CDSS for their support and leadership in the development of this Dental Department, and our SHA Practitioners are eager to resolve the patient care crisis at RUH so efforts can again focus on the delivery of care.

Recommendation:

If approved, then funding for the:

- a. Urgent equipment needs to be funded as part of this request: digital panoramic; digital sensors and software with an estimated expense of 60,000 (Quotes to follow this request).

Timeline:

- Currently, The Department of Dentistry continues to execute its Strategic Plan and develop a strategy for long term sustainability, regains accreditation as a dental service **(CDAC as already committed in writing to a site visit in 2020)**
- Continue to align itself with the Mission, Vision and Values of SHA. By April 2020, the RUH Department of Dentistry presents an interim progress report to CDSS on the utilization of the financial support and identification of any deficiencies and areas for improvement. Update to CDSS membership on progress to date.