

Saskatchewan Health Region - Oral Health Services Committee (SHR – OHSC)

UPDATE TO COUNCIL – Fall 2020

The last 6 months have proven to be transformational in the field of privatized and hospital based dental care. The CDSS would like to recognize the collaborative efforts of the SHA, the MOH and the CMO as well as the allied dental healthcare providers to allow for continuity of care during the COVID pandemic for the people of Saskatchewan. The CDSS has adopted a staged return to work program for the dental field which has outlined patient centered care in the safest possible conditions while basing the guidelines on the most current data and protocols recommended by the CDA and other provincial and national regulators. There have been great efforts to minimize the possibility of COVID transition in the Dental setting using the current IPC protocols and recommendations for management of aerosol generating environments. The CDSS will continue to work with all stakeholders and the Chief Medical Health officer to ensure all future regulations comply with provincial recommendations for public safety.

CDSS COVID-19 initiatives:

1. Emergency Dental Care program:

The CDSS and the SHA partnership allowed for the creation of a provincial emergency dental care pathway to ensure the patients of Saskatchewan had appropriate access to emergency dental care during the province wide dental hiatus. The goal of the program was to minimize the dental emergency visits to Saskatchewan ER's and to provide an action plan for emergency dental patients to the appropriate ambulatory care pathway. Leveled care was re-established by the CDSS as a staged approach in consultation with the MOH and the CMO of Saskatchewan.

2. CDSS PPE program:

The CDSS values the partnership with the SHA, MOH and Schaan Healthcare which has allowed the CDSS to provide dentists and allied staff with appropriate PPE during the COVID pandemic. Dentistry represents one of the largest professional groups worldwide providing aerosol generating procedures to patient populations. Initial and current literature associated with COVID-19 warned of the possible spread of COVID through aerosol generation in medical and dental environments. Considering this, in early June 2020 the CDSS worked with its partnerships to establish a pathway for dentists and staff to procure N95 mask and PPE supplies to ensure the reciprocal safety during dental procedures within the province. All the while, the CDSS understands that the current supply chain may be altered in the future during a "second wave" and will support our healthcare partners accordingly. To date there has been no evidence of COVID-19 transmission between dental patients and practitioners / staff in Saskatchewan.

3. Piolet Project - Protocol for Operative Management of Pediatric Surgical Patients during COVID-19 Pandemic:

Our OMFS and pediatric dentistry colleagues participated in a pilot project similar to our ENT colleagues to screen perioperative patients to ensure the appropriate use of PPE based on

individual risk factors. The project was a raving success with no adverse outcomes using the algorithm. The CDSS has recommended to the SHA that all adult and pediatric dental procedures completed in private practices as well as SHA facilities utilize the “protocol for Operative management of surgical patients during COVID-19 pandemic” to ensure continuity of perioperative management similar to all other surgical services in the Saskatchewan.

Current CDSS Non-COVID-19 initiatives:

1. Cayton Report:

The CDSS is creating a working committee to identify areas to improve governance and structure of the organization. In a smaller province such as Saskatchewan, there is some merit to a single organization serving as both a registrar and providing membership services. The working committee will be asked for recommendations to ensure the registrar upholds the protection of the public while the membership services maintains the health and wellness of our practitioners and their practices.

2. Pediatric Dentistry at JPCH has a significant waitlist/backlog which has been worsened during the COVID pandemic. Access to appropriate care for pediatric patients is a rising concern within the profession. Collaborative efforts with the dept of Pediatric Anesthesia, surgical operations at JPCH, and Pediatric Dentists have identified a possible solution by re-purposing the underutilized “Procedure Room” at JPCH to accommodate for Pediatric OMFS and Pediatric Dental care up to 3 days a week. The efforts would allow a retrospective analysis of waitlist times to determine efficacy of the project.

3. Pediatric care will continue to be closely monitored provincially to ensure patients have equal access to appropriate care in all geographic locations. This includes centralized referral and care to Saskatoon and Regina centers similar to the current protocols. MCIB facility fees have become an issue in the past and we are working with the MCIB representatives to overcome these issues. Lack of radiography capabilities has also been discussed and a protocol to ensure all OR's will have adequate radiology capabilities will be developed throughout the process. Re-operation in the pediatric population has been an issue with respect to resource allocation by the Ministry. The Department of Dentistry will eventually track re-operation rates and practitioners provincially to ensure that the highest quality of care is being provided to this patient population equally.

4. Infection control (IC) and the availability of SHA processed dental instruments has become an issue in the peripheral hospitals and SHA facilities. The SHA will not allow dentists to bring externally sterilized instruments into the OR setting. This has been happening for years in the periphery where caseloads are small and geographic areas are large. A provincial standard should be created and communicated to the credentialed practitioners as it becomes available.

5. The CDSS understands that there has been concerns raised w.r.t dental care provided in LT care facilities. There are two models for the delivery of dental care including:

- LT care facility consults completed by credentialed SHA dental practitioners to establish appropriate treatment plans. Once the family and patient agree to the advised treatment, arrangements are made secondarily for transfer of the patient to the dentists' private facility to provide care.
- LT care facility consults completed by credentialed SHA dental practitioners to establish appropriate treatment plans. Once the family and patient agree to the advised treatment, arrangements are made for the dentist(s) to provide care using mobile equipment in the LT Facility to minimize the transportation needs for patients and families.

The CDSS understands that there may be advantages and limitations to both such models and encourages members to continue to work with each other and the local SHA managers to ensure that the patients' needs are met in the most appropriate patient specific setting. Much work is needed to develop a protocol for LT care facilities and a registry of dentists providing care in these facilities.

6. The College of Dentistry (COD) has been active in 3 major programs within the SHA:

- Re-development of the General Practice Residency (GPR) program, with 2 residents and supervising dentist(s) integrated into some operations of SHA based dentistry (i.e. OMFS, dentistry for Cancer Care patients, and dental emergencies) and operating part of the time out of the COD Dental Clinic. The goal is to re-establish the program in July 2021 – COVID has stalled all progress on re-establishing the RUH dental clinic at this time.
- COD has a contract with SHA to support their public health programs and community dental clinics with a dentist supervisor (for dental therapists) quality assurance, continuing education, patient examinations, and occasional dental treatment.
- The COD has negotiated a new agreement with SHA to provide dental services for the communities of La Loche and Ile a la Crosse.

We are continuing to work in a collaborative fashion with all the Dental contributors to the SHA in order to achieve a transparent and functional dental department focusing on excellence in patient based dental care moving forward.

Sincerely,
Craig

Dr. Craig Humber, DMD, MSC, GPR, OMFS, FRCDC, Dipl ABOMS
President CDSS
Staff OMFS – Saskatoon Health Region
601 [201 1st Ave South](#)
[Saskatoon SK](#)
[S7K 1J5](#)
chumber@me.com