

Spring, as we know it, is right around the corner. Some of us might argue that it has been here for a while now. As we look forward toward the changing of the seasons, we are reminded of the changing landscape of dentistry as the CDCP roll out approaches.

The year 2024 thus far has been challenging to say the least. After nearly eighteen months of requesting a seat at the table, October 2023 brought an invitation from the Federal Government to provide our input into the much anticipated Canadian Dental Care Plan. Unfortunately, the plan's design had already been cast and was not open for much alteration. We continue to meet with the government and continue to advocate on your behalf, however, two words come to mind when I think of the whole process: frustrating and futile.

We have made headway in certain areas of the plan but will continue to push for change in the most important areas of the CDCP:

1. Freedom of patient choice in choosing their dentist
2. Administrative burden on practices (and the terms and conditions of the provider agreement)
3. Utilization of existing government dental programs
4. The risk of losing existing private insurance plans
5. Fair compensation for dental professionals

Each of these areas are critical to maintaining and improving access to care for the residents of Saskatchewan.

Our current recommendation is to delay enrolling in the CDCP until closer to the May start date to allow for more information to be released by the government. This will allow you to make an informed decision in the best interest of your patients and your practices.

Aside from the CDCP, the CDSS continues its regular duties; public protection by regulating healthy members. We began 2024 with the permanent appointment of Dr. Dean Zimmer as Registrar of the College of Dental Surgeons of Saskatchewan. In his seven month tenure as acting-registrar, Dr. Zimmer accomplished a formidable amount of progress behind the scenes of regulation. I am confident that the CDSS, its registrants, and the public are in good hands. I, along with several CDSS councilors, had the opportunity to attend the U of S Class of 2026 White Coat Ceremony. This annual event continues the long-standing tradition that many of you once experienced and demarcates the transition into clinical practice. I was honoured to provide an address on behalf of the CDSS to these students and their families during this milestone event.

We were pleased to hear that the Honorable Everett Hindley, Minister of Health for the Province of Saskatchewan, accepted our invitation to attend our spring Council meeting at the end of March. We look forward to another productive meeting and hope to continue strengthening our relationship with the Provincial Government.

We are also anticipating a successful start to the Neuromodulator Standard this summer.

I am honoured to be working with such a wonderful team of Council members from our Saskatchewan community as well as a superior management team and dedicated team members at the CDSS head office in Saskatoon. Thank you to each and every one of you. Thank you to all of our wonderful dentists and specialists who continue to make Saskatchewan the best place for safe, comprehensive dental care for everyone.

We will continue advocating on your behalf. As Barack Obama once said, "If you're walking down the right path and you're willing to keep walking, eventually you'll make progress."