



To the Members of the Association of Alberta Dental Assistants:

The Canadian Dental Assistants' Association (CDN DAA) is celebrating 76 years of oral health leadership in 2021. The inaugural meeting of the national association was held in Winnipeg in 1945 through the combined efforts of a small group of women dedicated to the idea that nationally-organized dental assistants have a greater capacity to contribute to improving Canadians' oral health. The CDN DAA remains committed to the ideal that dental assistants as a unified group have an increased potential to contribute to improved oral health care services and to the advancement of the profession.

Supporting its Organizational Members (provincial associations) and the Royal Canadian Dental Corps, the CDN DAA places itself at the forefront of issues such as labour mobility, occupational analysis and workplace health and safety. The CDN DAA advances the profession of dental assisting by working collaboratively with its Organizational Members to improve the professional environment of all dental assistants through national level advocacy, research and capacity, and community building for dental assisting organizations in Canada.

Striving to improve the conversation about the dental assisting profession, the CDN DAA works with industry partners, like the hygienist and dentists' associations to address issues that we share in common. We advocate for the inclusion of the dental assistants' perspective into any conversation that involves key areas of the oral health work environment. We ensure that the work tasks and responsibilities of dental assistants are taken into account to improve our work environment and to improve patient care. We also work with regulators and consult with government on projects and areas of mutual interest.

Throughout much of 2020, CDN DAA has been focused almost exclusively on navigating through the Covid-19 pandemic and its implications for our members. We have been sharing information received from government, industry partners and academia; drafted letters to federal government Ministers; drafted letters to dental and dental assisting regulators; evaluated and provided comprehensive feedback on a return-to-practice office manual issued by CDA; developed a series of infographics on various topics of interest related to the pandemic; participated in Government of Canada consultations regarding PPE and its supply chain; consulted with our insurance providers on the impact to our members' coverage; developed two surveys for dental assistants examining their concerns as they return-to-practice; provided input to the HEAL Covid-19 Task Force. In addition, over the past year, the CDN DAA completed the National Occupational Analysis (NOA). The completion of the NOA is the first step in re-classifying dental assisting in the Government of Canada's National Occupational Classification (NOC). The re-classification of the profession is critical to advancing the status of the profession across Canada as the NOC is Canada's national system for describing occupations and is a framework used to collect statistics, conduct research, and analyze labor market trends. CDN DAA is looking to ensure that the profession of dental assisting will be re-classified to accurately recognize the skill and educational level of dental assistants. A re-classification of dental assisting in the NOC will be a valuable tool for the CDN DAA as we continue to advocate for the regulation, standardized practice and respect for the contributions dental assistants make to the dental team.

The global Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted many issues that must be addressed if we are to improve the working environment of dental assistants. Addressing these issues will not be possible without your individual support as well as the strong support of provincial associations, like the Association of Alberta Dental Assistants. Supporting your regional, provincial and national professional associations ensures that the perspective of dental assistants is heard at the regional, provincial **and** national level. **Together** we are stronger. **Together** we will have a positive impact on the profession of dental assisting.

The CDN DAA wishes to thank all the dental assistants who have navigated through the Covid-19 pandemic and who continue to persevere and provide their patients with safe, quality care. Your contributions to the health and well-being of Canadians in the face of such adversity, is commendable.

Sincerely,
Stephanie Mullen-Kavanagh
Executive Director, CDN DAA



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