



Canadian Society for Disability and Oral Health

Dr. Olaf Plotzke – President

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The Canadian Society for Disability and Oral Health (CSDH) was established in London, Ontario, and given final Certification for Incorporation as a Not for Profit Society on November 26, 2019. The Board of Directors at that time included, Dr. Clive Friedman, Dr. Timucin Ari and Dr. Olaf Plotzke. Recently Dr. Chantal Czerednikow (a GP, from Montreal) and Ms. Carol Yakiwchuk (A Registered Dental Hygienist, from Vancouver) have joined our Board of Directors.

The Society's effort is to bring all Canadian oral healthcare providers, who are currently seeing patients with special needs and those we hope to bring on board, under one umbrella.

The Purpose or Vision of the Canadian Society for Disability and Oral Health is to promote, preserve and protect the oral health of people with disabilities.

One of the primary Aims or Mission of CSDH is to improve the oral health and quality of life for people with special health care needs (SHCN or SN). It was therefore decided to prepare our Bylaws as all inclusive. This means CSDH membership is open to all general dentists, dental specialists, dental hygienists, dental assistants, dental office staff and all other oral healthcare providers, including physicians, nurses, psw's and anyone else involved in the care of people with special needs. It should be noted that this is not a paediatric dentistry driven organization.

A further aim is to advocate for those people who cannot advocate for themselves with respect to accessing oral health care providers and the necessary oral care they require.

Other aims of our Society are to share knowledge (through educational meetings, mentoring, dental education and other measures) and to work closely with other organizations and regulatory bodies to assist in them to develop and establishing their own guidelines and

policies within their organizations to increase the awareness of the patients with special needs in our society and the serious need for the provision of oral care for this patient population.

“To initiate the support and advancement of teaching and education for all health and related disciplines in oral health care for people with a Disabling Condition”, is another aim of our Society. We feel that, along with promoting this aim at the current actively practicing professional level, education should start at the grassroots of professional education. This would mean making inroads into dental education in the undergraduate level for dentists, hygienists and dental assistants in our universities and colleges. Possibilities such as a specialty in Dental Hygiene with respect to dealing with patients with special needs or Mina Residencies for delivery of SN dental care by the GP exist.

We have recently (April 2020) been recognized as the Canadian Component Society of the iADH (International Association for Disability and Oral Health - [iadh.org](http://iadh.org) ) and as such will be able to access their resources and also network with people around the world as we collaborate in our missions.

The Society has attempted to make membership affordable with its current dues set at \$60.00 (Canadian) per year.

A major benefit of joining CSDH for the \$60.00 fee is that members will automatically be able to register to join the iADH at no extra cost. This provides the joint member many benefits, including but are not limited to, reduced rates for scientific conferences,

international and local branch meetings, eligibility for research prizes and bursaries along with online access to the Scientific Journal of Disability and Oral Health.

At this time, we have also made student membership at the undergraduate and graduate level free, during the time they are registered in their educational programme.

Our young, but growing Society has not been sitting still during these challenging times. Last week, facilitated by Dr. John O'Keefe from the CDA, we produced our initial web-based presentation concerning Pain Assessment in the Special Needs patient that has been finalized for posting on specific web sites for anyone to review.

Plans are also in the works during this crisis, to have a similar educational session on Communication especially directed toward the SHCN patient.

We have also been in discussion with The Canadian Special Olympics Society regarding aligning our organizations and a Memorandum of Understanding has been delivered to SO for their final review.

Plans are also underway to prepare a Forum with the Canadian Autistic Spectrum Disorder Alliance (CASDA) that hopes to gather and collate data to present to our Federal Minister for her consideration with respect to fulfilling the needs of this patient population.

If CAPD members would like to suggest topics for educational sessions relative to the SHCN patients, they are welcome to reach out to us and let us know.

Given the extent of oral health inequity experienced by people with Special Health Care Needs and recognizing the application of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, it is imperative that regulatory bodies and professional

organizations at all jurisdictional levels act to develop local oral health goals for this patient population in the context of their own communities.

In this regard we are asking all of you, as dedicated oral health care providers and members of the CAPD from across this great country of ours, to consider joining our Society.

All our oral health goals must focus on prevention, and evaluation of outcomes from services and activities provided, along with providing information and direct planning of oral health care services for people with disabilities.

As we all know, many Canadian dentists, especially the Pediatric specialists have been delivering dental services for patients with special needs for an exceptionally long time. This care often went far beyond the paediatric patient since it became apparent that, these specialists, through training and experience developed the competence, confidence, and comfort level to continue the care of their once young patients into adulthood. However, adult patients whether they have special needs or not, have adult dental needs that often go beyond the scope of treatment provided by a paediatric dentist or they may just require ongoing regular care and family or general dentists can and should, to a certain degree, be able to fulfill these needs. This is where the need to learn must come in.

A previously stated aim i.e., “To initiate the support and advancement of teaching and education for all health and related disciplines in oral health care for people with a Disabling Condition”, speaks loud and clear to this need.

We are currently developing Transition Tools documents and case complexity with the CDA, both of which are with the CDA stakeholders of review. The hope is to have these available by September with all the appropriate supplemental educational material.

At moments like this I realize I am preaching to the choir and in this regard, I encourage those of you who have been dealing with patients with special needs, to speak to your

colleagues, not only in our profession but all oral health care providers, that you may know, who have not, for some reason, taken that first step, and have them ask themselves “why not?”.

Perhaps our Pediatric Academy could consider initiating a mentoring programme for GP’S and their staff to educate them about SN patients’ assessment and care.

No matter what, let them know that the CSDH is here to provide the tools for taking that first step. We are here for “you”, all oral health care providers, to aid in improving the quality of life and oral health of patients, of all ages, with special needs.

For more information about CSDH activities and membership application, please visit our web site at [www.csdh.ca](http://www.csdh.ca). It is up and running now to facilitate anyone wishing to join online.

Look us up on facebook at: [Canadian Society for Disability and Oral Health](#)

and give us a  Like

Or contact: Dr. Olaf Plotzke at [president@csdh.ca](mailto:president@csdh.ca)

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