

June 07, 2014: 5th Anniversary Celebrations Remarks - Registrar Patricia Grant

CDHNS History

The College of Dental Hygienists of Nova Scotia (CDHNS) has evolved from a member association; the Nova Scotia Dental Hygienists Association (NSDHA) to a regulatory body.

Dental hygienist began to work in Nova Scotia in **1955**, with the institution of dental hygiene clinics in some of the provincial schools. These clinics were established by the Nova Scotia Department of Health, Dental Health Division under the direction of Dr. Gordon Dawson.

~~

Dr. Gordon Dawson, Director of the Dental Health division NS Department of Health prepared the first Act respecting the practice of Dental Hygiene in the province. Eventually the registration and licensing of dental hygienists became the responsibility of the Provincial Dental Board of Nova Scotia until the Dental Act and remained so until 2009.

From **1955 to 1962**, the only practicing dental hygienists in Nova Scotia were bursary students under contract to the Nova Scotia Department of Health. These dental hygienists were graduates from schools in the United States, usually New York City or the University of Toronto, Canada.

~~

In 1962, the School of Dental Hygiene was formed at Dalhousie University, and the Nova Scotia Dental Hygienists Association (NSDHA) was formed, with 10 founding members. These early members were very active in the formation of the Canadian Dental Hygienists Association (CDHA) in 1963. (acknowledge Kate Mac Donald, Life member of CDHNS and founding members of NSDHA)

The NSDHA became incorporated under the Societies Act in **1973**.

- In the mid to late 1970`s discussions begin to take place within NSDHA regarding the practice of dental hygiene in Nova Scotia.
Over the next **25 years** NSDHA saw many changes take place within health care and in the dental hygiene profession across Canada particularly in the areas of regulation and access to care.

In the 1990`s NSDHA made it their mission to improve access to oral health care for Nova Scotians - this led to the long term goal of legislative change which would make dental hygienists self regulating in NS.

In what turned out to be a pivotal point at an AGM in Bridgewater a motion was passed to institute a \$50.00 per member levy to finance the push toward self regulation .

After an extensive period of negotiation and hard work on December 13, 2007 the Dental Hygienists Act of Nova Scotia received Royal Assent.

Subsequent regulations pursuant to the Act awaited approval and proclamation. The negotiations for the regulations proved to be difficult and required extensive work. Proclamation of the Act and Regulations took place on MAY 15, 2009.

Under the Act, forty six years after its inception the NSDHA dissolved and the College of Dental Hygienists of Nova Scotia (CDHNS) came into being. Today the CDHNS is 670 members strong.

The NSDHA/ CDHNS have a proud history of strong leadership, clear goals and sheer determination.

The foresight and efforts of past and present councils, committees, volunteers, supporters, staff and our members has resulted in attaining and maintaining self regulation. The result is dental hygienists in Nova Scotia regulate, license and discipline their own profession and can deliver care directly to the public They can practice to their full scope in a variety of settings to increase the public's access to dental hygiene care.

The Cost of Change

The changes sought and accomplished by our profession over the past 50 years did not come without a cost – in dollars, time, energy and angst. Over the years many thousands of dollars were spent to hire consultants and lawyers that helped us negotiate through the legal and political landscape to become a self regulated profession and to establish all the mechanisms to ensure protection of the public.

Cost related to volunteer services is more difficult to measure. I have seen first-hand the extraordinary amount of personal time willingly given by our members. I have also seen the adversity some of them faced to bring our profession to its current position.

While adversity is not something we want to dwell on, it is important for new registrants and those who were not on the front lines as the profession worked toward self-

regulation to know that our achievements did not come easily or without personal cost for some of our members.

Valued Support

Although there has been substantive opposition from external sources over the past 50 years, there has also been an incredible amount of support. On our 5th anniversary it is proper to thank those who did assist us along the way. The School of Dental Hygiene, Faculty of Dentistry continuing education, and LA program, the Provincial Dental Board during the transition, the Health Professions Regulatory Network, DH Regulatory Colleges in Canada and the CDHA were among the many who played significant roles.

At this time I would like to call on the Council Chair Wendy Stewart to acknowledge some of the members who were instrumental in obtaining self regulation and past council members who are present tonight.