Dr. Brenton Winnett - Getting to Know the Association of Prosthodontists of Canada

Dr. J. O'Keefe: There are approximately 250 Prosthodontists in Canada and the organization that represents that group nationally is the Association of Prosthodontist of Canada, or APC in acronym central. To find out more about that organization, Prosthodontists and Prosthodontics in Canada I'm joined today from Victoria by the president of APC, Dr. Brent Winnett. Welcome to the show, Brent.

Dr. B. Winnett: Thank you, John. Good morning.

Dr. J. O'Keefe: Good afternoon for us here in eastern Canada! Brent, what is APC?

Dr. B. Winnett: Well, the Association of Prosthodontists of Canada is the voice for the collective group of Prosthodontists practicing actively and those who have contributed their careers to Prosthodontics in Canada and maintain the interest in the profession's health and wellbeing.

Dr. J. O'Keefe: And what does the organization do for its members and people beyond the membership?

Dr. B. Winnett: When we talk about it being the voice, it's important for two purposes. Number one is of course we'd like to represent, as best we can, the collective best interests of our profession. The second part of that of course is in order to come to a consensus as best the membership can on any given topic, we have the opportunity to act as a forum for our members to collaborate with each other and raise issues from the different parts of Canada that others may not be aware of. It's particularly important, particularly when it comes to regulatory issues that we're aware of what's happening in different parts of Canada because the provinces each have their own discretion as to how they regulate the professional within their confines. Some of these issues, because of, for example, the portability of employment standards across the country. Some of these issues are national issues. They just haven't become so immediately yet. So, the Association of Prosthodontists of Canada represents nationally the group of Prosthodontists practicing in Canada, but also regionally. And we try to focus our efforts when it comes to the regional activity through the provincial professional bodies, for example, like the Association of Prosthodontists of Ontario, for example.

Dr. J. O'Keefe: Right. Are you prepared to share with us what are the main issues, clinical and non-clinical, that are on the agenda of APC on your provincial affiliates these days?

Dr. B. Winnett: Well, certainly. Right now, there are two that come to mind that we've been very busy with. Of great importance to the professional as a whole, as well as the other specialists in Canada, are the recent changes underway at the Royal College of Dentists of Canada. For example, the Canadian Dental Regulatory Federation, Regulatory Body Federation, the CDRAF, is actively engaged right now in trying to come up with a model for specialty licensure minimum requirements as we move forward. And this is in of course the association's best interest representing Prosthodontist. But for example, this is another way that the APC is involved on a national level because we represent our professional, the specialty of Prosthodontics, in the Canadian Dental Specialists Association which is recognized as the national body for the specialists as a whole. So, for example, when dealing with the Canadian Dental Regulatory Authority Federation, the CDSA is in the position of being able to provide direct consultation on these issues and the APC is the voice of Prosthodontist at that forum.

Dr. B. Winnett: So that issue, particularly right now, just simply because of timing as well as it's important. This is a current issue that we're trying to deal with. Another issue that the APC has been actively involved in this last couple of years, and this speaks to the regional differences across Canada, is the scope of practice of denturists in Canada. The denturists have, depending on which province they practice in, different scopes of practice. And these scopes of practice are of course of interest to the association because of the critical importance of patient safety as we, as specialists recognized by the accredited educational institutes that we graduated from, but also the fact that we are recognized as specialists across the country. Our scope of practice is defined by certain regulated acts and the association is trying to be very, very active in ensuring that each province is aware of what other provinces consider to be the scope of practice and why. So, we have the opportunity and frankly, the privilege and the opportunity to speak on behalf of Prosthodontists to ensure that patient safety remains foremost in all of these discussions. That consideration to us is why we have differentiations between the different scopes of practice and the specialties and other health care providers.

Dr. J. O'Keefe: So, if I was to summarize, essentially, the offshoot of your two primary issues that you just talked about there, your real focus is patient safety, quality of care

Dr. B. Winnett: Always. As I said, and I use the word carefully, it's a privilege to be given the opportunity to practice. When we provide health care, our purpose, our sole purpose, is to ensure that what is provided is of the highest quality possible but meeting high standards that are generally agreed upon. And because of Canada's regional differentiation "generally agreed upon" (in quotations) is not easy to come by sometimes. And we need to make sure that the parties that are involved, the stakeholders involved are aware that there are differences in

perspective, differences in priority, and yet we want that focus, that first priority always to be patient safety.

Dr. J. O'Keefe: Right. Now you're, I think, halfway through a two-year term as president of APC.

Dr. B. Winnett: Just about, yes.

Dr. J. O'Keefe: What are your goals? What would you like to be able to say at the end of your time that you've achieved in your tenure as president?

Dr. B. Winnett: Well, I mean that's a great question. I think sometimes we focus on individual accomplishments as if they were individual, but they're not, at least from my perspective, it's not, I don't accomplish anything as a president. It's our membership that works together to make this happen and I just happen to be the person who at the moment is in front of the microphone. We are afforded these opportunities to speak, but I don't speak from my perspective. I speak from what my membership has told me their priorities are. And as I mentioned earlier, it's not always easy to come to a consensus and there are differences in priorities. But because as a whole our profession, at least I can say for certainty on the two issues I mentioned which we've recently discussed in great detail at our annual general meeting in Banff this past couple of weeks ago, I can tell you with certainty that the patient safety issue is at the forefront of everyone's mind. And because of that, it's very easy. Even though we don't agree on the niceties, the different specifics province to province, by being able to put that priority forward, we're accomplishing as a group what we were intended to accomplish as a self-regulating profession in the first place. We're here to take care of our patients as best as we as specialists can because no one knows better than we as specialists what the standard needs to be in order to achieve the excellence in patient care we all want.

Dr. J. O'Keefe: Right. And of course, as you articulated, you are a spokesperson for your membership.

Dr. B. Winnett: That is a great summary. Yes.

Dr. J. O'Keefe: If I said to you, take the opportunity to send a shout out message to the dentists of Canada, the non-Prosthodontists who may be listening to this episode, what have you got to say to them?

Dr. B. Winnett: Well, I love the opportunity. Thank you. We interact on a local level here in ways that I didn't have to interact when I was formerly a member of the Canadian Armed Forces in the Royal Canadian Dental Corps. There are different considerations when out in private practice with our referring general dentists. And I would like the opportunity to say that no general dentist ever needs to feel, ever, under any circumstances, that we have any priority except excellence

in patient care, in our minds, and that their referrals to us are not only appreciated but cherished. These are opportunities for us to work together to make sure that the patients that we are trying our very best as a collective whole to give the best care for, it's a collaborative effort and no one does it alone. We work together and it's a privilege to have those referrals and a

privilege to have your trust in treating your patients. So, when you make a referral to us, I can say with total confidence, the Prosthodontist of Canada have that patient safety in their forefront of their minds and we'll send those patients back to you with the best that we've been able to provide so that you can continue managing their overall care.

Dr. J. O'Keefe: Dr. Brent Winnett, thank you for keeping patient safety centrally to everything you said today and thank you for taking the time to speak with us on CDA Oasis.

Dr. B. Winnett: Thank you, John. I appreciate the opportunity.