

# DENTAL SPECIALISTS

IN PRACTICE

14

the bridge

## Specialists Involved in the BCDA *A conversation with Dr. Joel Fransen, President, BC Society of Endodontists*



Dr. Joel Fransen

### **What role do you think the specialist societies can play in the British Columbia Dental Association's (BCDA) mentorship programs?**

I believe the specialist societies have a very valuable role to play and encourage all of the specialists to get involved. I see our role as an active, 'real-time' resource for general dentists, new practitioners and fellow specialists.

The mentorship program is an efficient means for each specialty to keep the greater dental community informed of new developments in its field as well as to learn of new developments in other fields and general dentistry.

Sharing information is not a one-way process. The specialist societies will learn and grow from their participation in the mentorship program by getting real-time feedback as to the pertinent issues in their field for general dentists. This honest exchange of information, with no commercial drive for sales, will allow general practice dentists and specialists to address the core principles of any issue.

Each society will be able to team-up new graduates and general dentists with various specialists to encourage active working relationships. The specialist societies will be able to learn the challenges that new and experienced dentists

in BC are facing and how their specialty can help.

The 'matching' format of the mentorship program allows for equal opportunity access for all dentists regardless of where they are in BC. This will be of particular benefit to dentists in rural areas, who may feel isolated from the rest of the dental community.

### **How (are you/did you) get involved in mentoring?**

I saw the link on the BCDA web page and looked into it further. I wish such a system was available when I was a new grad. I am glad it is around now and look forward to seeing it grow and develop over the next few years. I have also recently posted some information on the Dental Mentorship Program (DMP) blog site and I plan on making regular contributions.

### **What do you think are the benefits of mentoring for the mentee and the mentor?**

Mentoring fosters the professional development of both participants. The mentor will become more keenly aware of the challenges facing other dentists. This will allow the interchange of ideas on a diverse range of subjects. The mentee knows they have access to professional support from a number of specialists involved in the program, not just through one specific mentor.

### **Do you think that mentoring can strengthen the profession?**

Mentoring (face-to-face and online) will

**“ By working together we can raise the level of care each of us provides—a high tide that raises all boats. The fact the blog is as 'real-time' as it is, makes it a resource like none other I can think of. ”**

definitely strengthen the profession. It will foster professional development through the honest interaction between dental colleagues. This is not a lecture format where the presenter proclaims his beliefs and the audience listens. This is real life dentistry where the challenges are addressed in real-time in a team framework.

### **What other ways do you see dentists sharing information with each other to benefit individual dentists/the profession?**

It will be exciting to see how the BCDA general member and DMP discussion forum/blogs will catch on. These blogs may be the impetus for new groups to develop 'offline', be they regional or a collection of colleagues that decide to meet face-to-face, or in their own online space.

Other ways of dentists sharing information would be to see more articles in BCDA publications from regular members. The first step in this process could be contributing to the blog and if the subject garners enough interest a few contributors may collaborate on an article or presentation at the Pacific Dental Conference.

The development of more regional study clubs will also help foster the sharing of

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information. Perhaps such groups can contribute to the blog as well, sharing some of the information they have discovered.

### What member benefit do you see in our members' Discussion Forum/Blog?

I hope the members' blog will become our online dental community—specifically for BC dentists. We can use the tool to provide sound and reasonable feedback to questions or queries. It allows the dentists of BC to share their collective experiences and knowledge. By working together we can raise the level of care each of us provides—a high tide that raises all boats. The fact the blog is as 'real-time' as it is, makes it a resource like none other I can think of.

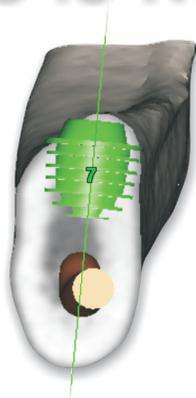
The Discussion Forum/Blog is the start of a new resource for BC dentists. It is up to each of us to put in the effort to foster its early development. We all have something interesting to share—let's get started!

I suspect members may be hesitant to blog as they feel a little exposed. I think it is worth mentioning that what is shared on the blog cannot be used to assassinate a person's character. Also, members have the ability to post anonymously e.g. "Vancouver dentist" vs. "Dr. Sam Smith".

I am also part of a blog for endodontists. The rule of never divulging information shared on the blog to anyone outside of the blog is strictly enforced. This encourages us to share our difficult cases and cases we are not proud of. The resultant honest interaction and exchange of ideas raises the bar of all those participating. It promotes us to perform endodontics at the highest possible level and always ethically. That is the goal of the BCDA Discussion Forum/Blog, to foster professional development in a respectful and safe environment. ■

*Dr. Joel Fransen is President of the BC Society of Endodontics.*

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