RCDSO | Royal College of
Dental Surgeons of Ontario

STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-25

Our Purpose

All regulated health professionals in the province of Ontario are governed by a regulatory college. Each health regulatory College is responsible for:

Assuring the public's access to safe, competent and ethical health care services.

Setting the education and other qualifications necessary to become a registered professional.

Developing professional and ethical standards and guidelines.

Holding registered health professionals accountable for their conduct and practice through a complaints and investigation processes.

The Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario (RCDSO) is one of 26 health regulatory colleges in the province with the responsibility and the legal authority to assure patients' access to safe care.

Who We Are

The RCDSO registers and oversees nearly 10,800 dentists in the province.

We work in the public interest by putting patients first. We are committed to transparency, accessibility and fairness in all of our work. We assure the public's access to quality dental services by providing leadership to the dental profession in regulation.

What We Accomplished

Strategic Plan 2020-23

The College launched its first Strategic Plan in 2020. It included seven strategic objectives:

1	College Governance is progressive and patient-centred.
2	Decision-making is informed by best available data and evidence.
3	Potential external disruptors are anticipated and addressed.
4	Continuous quality improvement and risk-based regulation inform the work of the College and expectations the College sets for the profession.
5	Access to care is improved across Ontario.
6	We build engagement with patients and dentists.
7	College staff are supported in doing their best work.

Implementation was a College-wide effort, involving staff from across the organization, Council and College committees. In total, staff initiated 44 projects under the seven strategic objectives and were successful in completing 90% of those projects.

KEY OUTCOMES AND SUCCESSES

Continuous Quality improvement

- Reduced timelines for the resolution of College case files

- Developed risk-based policies and frameworks to evaluate core regulatory functions

- Launched systemic data collection to support decision making and analysis

- Completed first College Performance Measurement Framework to improve public accountability

- Began to update Customer Relationship Management technology solutions

- Held Access to Care developmental stakeholder meeting and built dedicated resource webpage

- Updated ongoing standards review process

- Enhanced French language service and website content

Responding to emerging issues

- Developed guidance to the profession for the provision of safe and effective care during the COVID-19 pandemic

- Updated guidelines for provision of clinical care along with other oral health regulators

Organizational transformation

- Improved governance, including creation of Governance Working Group; conflict of interest declarations for Council; and diversity survey for future Council and committee members

- Hired the first College data scientist to create departmental dashboards and expand scope of data on profession

- Digitized paper records through a records management program

Supporting staff

- Provided significant technological and ergonomic solutions to enable work from home with the unexpected emergence of COVID-19 and the rapid shift to remote and hybrid work

- Introduced a new performance management system including annual goal setting and transparent salary ranges

- Provided all-staff training in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (unconscious bias, micro-aggressions, managing bias in hiring, cultural competency) over two years with the support of Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI)

Strategic Plan 2023-2025

Plan 101

THE RCDSO'S 2023-25 STRATEGIC PLAN will guide our work over the next three years. We will build stronger connections with our community partners; promote a culture of professionalism in dentistry; and actively advance the public interest in all that we do.

In this report, you will find out more about the previous plan that established the groundwork for our 2023-2025 plan. We will outline six projects under the current plan, including goals, context, approach and anticipated results.

PILLARS

PROFESSIONALISM

STRATEGIC PROJECTS

- College Standards
- Access to Care

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

STRATEGIC PROJECTS

- Service Experience
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

EMERGING ISSUES

STRATEGIC PROJECTS

- Governance Review and Modernization
- Practice Models and Corporate Dentistry

HOW WE GOT HERE

This Strategic Plan builds on the College's previous plan of 2020-23, which tackled seven objectives and 44 projects (see more under Accomplishments on page 4). Council set out the direction for the 2023-25 plan in March 2022 and, over the course of the year, consultation with staff, advisory groups, and external respondents ensued. The result is a sharply focused, ambitious plan which was approved by Council in September 2022.

1,025
responses to external survey

77
submissions from College staff

19
participants from the Citizens Advisory Group (CAG)

OUR COMMITMENT

We take an evidence-informed approach to decision making.

We apply a risk-based perspective in regulating the profession.

We integrate the principles of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in all we do.

WHAT'S INVOLVED?

Each project in the Strategic Plan has a charter that includes context, goals and scope as well as alignment with organization values and strategic objectives. An equity impact assessment has been incorporated into each project. Project work is led by a project manager; supported by a project sponsor; and includes a plan, results and key performance indicators. The projects span the entire three years of the strategic plan and may extend beyond that time frame.

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Access to Care

As the regulatory body for Ontario dentists, working in the public interest, we believe that equitable access to oral health care must be improved for Ontarians. Access to care is a broad and multi-dimensional issue that will necessarily involve activity from many strategic partners. Building on initiatives under the 2020-23 Strategic Plan, this project will focus on professionalism and advancing access.

GOAL

The overall objective of the project is to advance and improve equitable access to oral health care in Ontario. Using the best available data to identify current access issues and opportunities, this project will include concrete actions to help remove barriers and provide improved resources for the profession and patients.

CONTEXT

Many Ontarians do not currently have adequate access to oral health care services and some communities are disproportionately impacted by poor oral health. According to Public Health Ontario, significant inequities in access are related to age, insurance, income, education and immigration status. A lack of accessible oral health care has detrimental impacts on patient health outcomes, the health care system and the reputation of the dental profession. Additionally, there are many changes taking place in the oral health landscape, including the launch of the interim Canada Dental Benefit in 2022 and

plans for expansion in 2023 and beyond, which will significantly expand the number of Ontarians who are able to access at least some oral health care.

APPROACH

The Access to Care project has a four-pronged approach including data, education and information sharing, collaboration and engagement, and professional expectations. The project includes enhancing continuing education (CE) opportunities for the profession related to access.

We will explore data-sharing opportunities with strategic partners. We will consult and collaborate with diverse stakeholders to inform the development of key documents. The plan includes development and clarification on RCDSO positions related to access and the provision of continuing education (CE) opportunities for the profession related to access. The project will also see the creation of accessible patient-focused resources.

PLANNED RESULTS

Key activities for the Access to Care project include:

> Improved patient-focused resources to support the public in accessing services on our website including a focus on communicating key changes within the oral health care landscape (e.g., Canadian Dental Benefit developments).

> Strengthened relationships with interested parties across disciplines.

> Enhanced Continuing Education (CE) opportunities to promote Access to Care related activities.

> Engagement and collaboration with patients, the profession, oral health regulators and other partners through a comprehensive consultation.

> Multi-stakeholder Working Group assisted in the development of professional expectations regarding accepting new patients and a new professionalism guide that sets out the values, principles, and duties of the profession.

> Professionalism Guide on the duties of the profession, including the Colleges' position on key legal and ethical issues in relation to accepting patients on social or government programs.

> Increased engagement and awareness of public, profession and Council on key issues related to Access to Care and innovative models of service delivery.
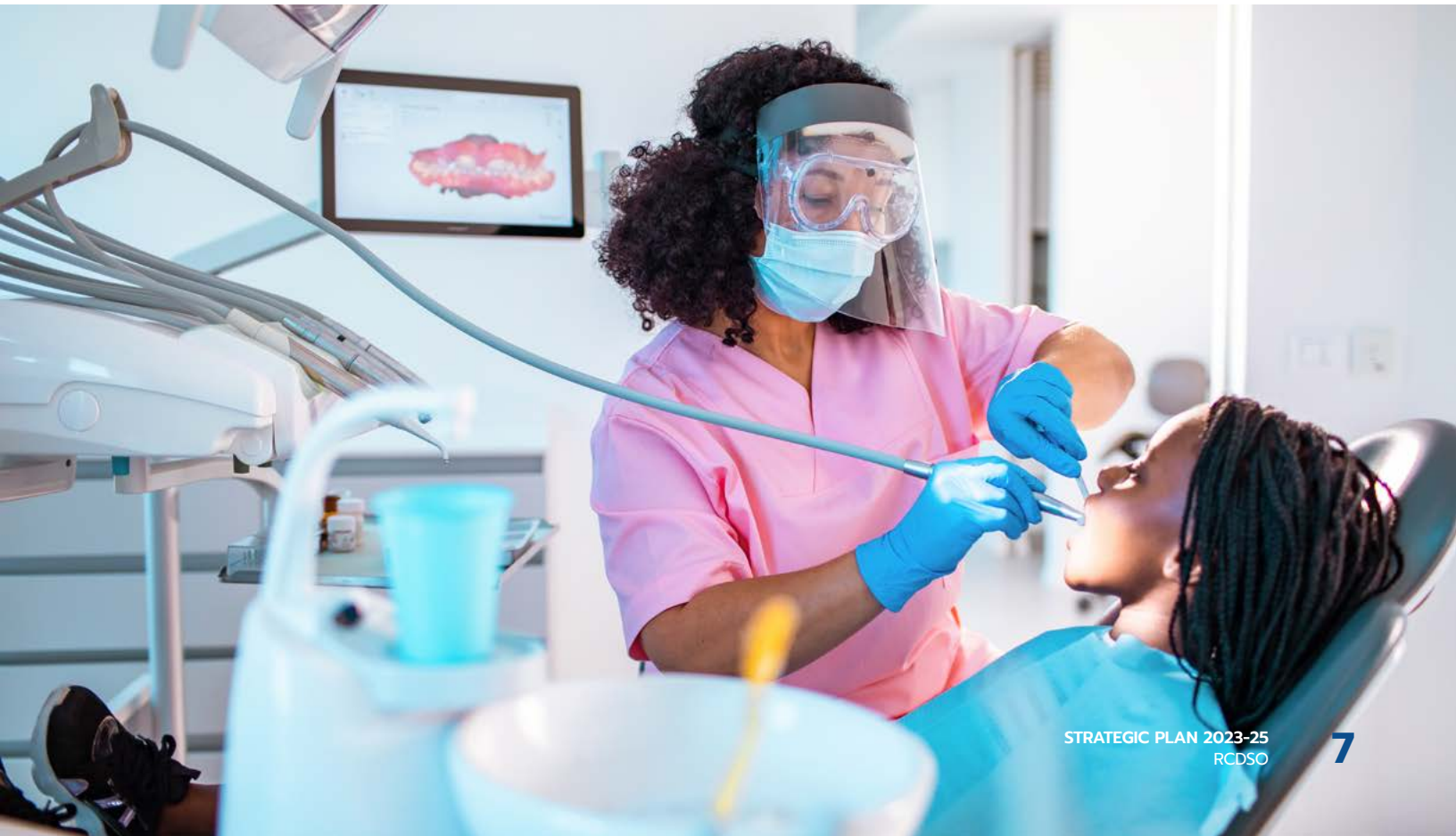
College Standards

With over 25 Standards of Practice, Guidelines and Practice Advisories and related supporting documents, work on modernizing standards is ongoing and essential to RCDSO's regulatory responsibilities.

GOAL

College Standards will be modernized and updated following an established review cycle. This work is principally concerned with providing dentists with guidance that is accurate, comprehensive, up-to-date, evidence-informed and reasonable.

CONTEXT

Deficiencies and gaps arise naturally over the lifecycle of a document as research and current practice evolves. In the course of regular use by staff, the profession and the public, gaps and inconsistencies have been identified. Updating the inventory of Standards, Practice Advisories, and Guidelines and supplementary resources, such as FAQs, will also be an opportunity to ensure best practices in drafting and presentation.

APPROACH

This project will help support a culture of professionalism and protect the public interest by ensuring that information we provide is accurate and contemporary. A risk-based approach will inform the priority sequence by which standards are reviewed and updated. This project will also aim to improve the accessibility and inclusivity of College standards. The project has seven key areas of focus:

1 The comprehensive analysis of all existing Standards, Practice Advisories, and Guidelines.

2 An analysis of existing resources, including the identification of areas in need of review or updating.

3 The identification of gaps in existing resources that require the development of *new* positions, Standards, or other resources.

4 A decision-making framework to support the prioritization of Standards work (i.e., the sequence in which documents are updated/developed) with an emphasis on risk mitigation.

5 The development of a comprehensive and transparent new approach to Standards review and development that can be applied to all Standards going forward.

6 The completion of *one full cycle* of Standards updates/development as a means of testing, updating, and formalizing RCDSO's highest priority standards.

7 A corresponding update to RCDSO's Standards and resources page on the College website.

PLANNED RESULTS

The work to develop new and revised Standards and other resources is the ultimate result but other benefits will include:

› An up-to-date and modernized approach and framework for future Standards work.

› The incorporation of staff dentists and other clinical staff into Standards work.

› An enhanced approach to public engagement, with an emphasis on EDI and historically-underrepresented communities.

› Improved compliance and engagement with the profession.

› A safer, more effective, more equitable practice environment for patients.

› Greater transparency and more effective information on our website.

2023-25 Projects

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

STAKEHOLDER
ENGAGEMENT

Integrating Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in all that we do as a College involves continuously learning, reflecting and developing frameworks and resources that support our efforts. This is an ongoing process and will be a journey for the organization that extends beyond the term of the strategic plan.

GOAL

This project will demonstrate our firm commitment to become an equity-focused, diverse and inclusive organization, actively leading by example to implement change within our organization and in dental regulation.

CONTEXT

The external environment is calling for organizations like the RCDSO to be accountable for EDI in both operations and services. The College has been working with CCDI since 2019 on training and awareness for all staff. The College has an active and engaged Equity, Diversity and Inclusion committee. RCDSO has appointed a senior leader, College Equity Officer, to champion organization-wide efforts and to lead this project.

APPROACH

This work will nurture a culture at the RCDSO where diverse voices, perspectives and experiences are welcomed and become our strength.

The EDI Project will not be possible without collaboration throughout the College and deep partnerships with communities, subject matter experts and colleagues in the regulatory sector. We will seek to enable all other RCDSO projects with the tools and frameworks they need to embed principles of EDI in all we do. This project specifically contemplates the diverse public we serve and our need to reflect on barriers we might be creating in our processes and tools. This project will be informed by the variety of voices we hear in our surveys, data and user stories.

PLANNED RESULTS

> Creation of several experiential EDI learning opportunities and content for staff, Council, the profession and the public.

> Relationship building and community engagement to deepen our understanding of the many publics we serve.

> Continued internal work that support staff education and growth.

> Meaningful actions towards reconciliation with Indigenous Communities (First Nations, Métis, Inuit and others).

> Initiatives that can support better access to care for the public.

Service Experience

Improving the service experience for the public and the profession is part of the role of any modern regulator. The scope of this project work seeks to bolster our service culture and ensure our systems and processes enable excellent support, information flow and response times.

GOAL

By 2025, RCDSO will have a more agile, responsive service experience for all who contact us.

CONTEXT

We've identified opportunities where we can improve our service to the profession and the public. Additionally, we also want to demonstrate preparedness in delivering services to the diverse populations of Ontario.

APPROACH

We will build a sustainable network of data collectors to measure our service experience across the College and a mechanism for staff to analyze and learn about the service they are providing. These insights will lay the groundwork for evidence-based continuous improvement efforts.

Key elements of the project include work to:

> Strengthen our capacity to actively offer French services.

> Demonstrate compliance with AODA across the organization and a culture of accessibility.

> Emphasizing service experience as a key part of the RCDSO's staff culture.

> Implementing technology that simplifies and enhances user experience of our services.

This work is directly linked with the Colleges' EDI Strategic project. All of these initiatives will be built on a foundation of EDI principles that contemplate the diversity of the people we serve and our need to remove barriers in our services, processes and tools.

RESULTS

This phase of service experience work will see:

> Improvements to resources available to better provide an active offer of French Services.

> Creation of a series of training and resources that build an inclusive culture to support persons with disabilities.

> Focused review of the registrant portal user experience and functionality for improvements.

> Demonstration that a culture of service is clearly understood and shared by staff.

> A renewed strategy for Corporate Social Responsibility.

2023-25 Projects

Governance Review and Modernization

EMERGING ISSUES

This project includes work to analyze emerging governance modernization trends in Ontario and beyond and implement governance review, moving the College forward toward the modern governance framework proposed by the Ministry of Health in 2022. Building on initiatives under the 2020-2022 Strategic Plan, this project will focus on the continual improvement of Council governance.

GOAL

This project will strengthen accountability by enhancing the competency-based assessment of Council and committee members to effectively govern the profession; improving public confidence and trust through transparent decision-making; ensuring decisions are made in the public interest; and improving EDI on Council and committees.

CONTEXT

Governance is a critical input for regulatory performance and the Ontario Ministry of Health's College Performance Measurement Framework (CPMF). Governments in some provinces and abroad have advanced legislative reform. In January 2022, the Ministry circulated a policy proposal for governance reform in the health regulatory sector.

It included considerations about parity, smaller boards, separation of Council and Committees, etc. including the establishment of a "Nomination and Selection Committee". In September 2022, Council approved, in principle, terms of reference for a new Governance Committee. The new committee will be the central governance body to make strategic recommendations to Council regarding governance modernization initiatives in preparation for future Council district elections cycles and committee appointments.

APPROACH

This project anticipates 11 areas of focus:

1 2022 election summary report and reform proposal.

2 Increase Council's knowledge and support for change.

3 Develop and implement operational components (e.g., consider modifications to online voting platform, display voting district on public register).

4 Conduct Council and committee orientation and ongoing education.

5 Establish and support a fully operational new Governance Committee.

6 Plan for, develop and implement Governance modernization in line with Ontario MOH Governance Reform and Regulatory Reform proposal (January 2022).

7 Enhance EDI on Council and committees.

8 Ensure Council decisions advance the public interest and avoid conflicts of interest.

9 Enhance Council and committee performance evaluation

10 Amend bylaws to address structural constraints and cumbersome and dated processes

11 Develop and implement governance handbook/manual.

PLANNED RESULTS

This project will result in:

> Council being supported with respect to readiness for change.

> A new Governance Committee that improves transparency and ensures rigour and accountability.

> EDI strengthened on Council and committees, and progress being publicly reported.

> Initiatives that enhance the public trust and confidence in the College's ability to govern in the public interest.

> Council's leadership in governance reform that is compatible with future reform legislation by the Government of Ontario.

It is anticipated that development and implementation of the entire project will take five years and objectives that are not completed in this project cycle will continue into the next strategic plan.

2023-25 Projects

Practice Models and Corporate Dentistry

EMERGING ISSUES

The profession of dentistry is founded on trustworthiness and putting patients' interests first. The best interests of patients should continue to drive the operational and clinical decisions dentists make regardless of the practice model they work in.

GOAL

The goal of this project is to research practice and regulatory models resulting in a research report. This report will include options for how to address the issues and opportunities that arise in various practice models. This paper will help inform the modernization of oral health care regulation, with the guidance of Council, to enable effective regulation of a variety of practice models.

CONTEXT

Ontario dentists practise in different practice models and these have traditionally included private dental practices and multiple offices owned and operated by a single dentist or multiple dentists.

These practice models may also have associate dentist(s) working in the office. Dental corporations (also known as networks) have developed across Canada and in Ontario. These dental corporations own and operate multiple dental practices and generally provide centralized operational support for the business elements of dental practices.

Questions and concerns regarding the corporatization of dentistry have been raised by both the profession and the public. This has led to the need to explore the various practice models to help ensure safe, quality dental care for patients. It is important that dental care is delivered consistently in all practice models and that effective regulatory oversight is provided.

APPROACH

This project will include extensive consultation and collaboration with other oral health regulators and associations as well as other strategic partners. The project will have two phases: researching and then reporting on and implementing the options for regulatory reform. The research and proposed options will be presented to Council for decision-making.

Consultation and engagement activities will include:

> Dentists, patients and the public, including the Citizen Advisory Group (CAG).

> Regulatory colleges and associations, including oral health partners.

RESULT

The result of this project will be to expand the understanding of the issues and opportunities that various practice models have on regulation and the quality of care.

We will produce a report on the research findings and options informed by:

> Research summary of College information (e.g., how the College currently regulates the profession, existing expectations and guidelines that relate to practice models).

> Literature review summary.

> Jurisdictional review summary.

> Consultation summary (following external consultation and engagement activities).

> Summary of issues and opportunities associated with various practice models.

> Clearer expectations and or guidance for dentists regarding practising in various practice models.

> Ability for the College to effectively regulate different practice environments in the public interest.

Transparency

Transparency is a critical part of any successful strategic plan. It helps to clarify the goals, identify and overcome obstacles and build stronger relationships. In addition to a sample of the key performance indicators we will be tracking as part of this plan, RCDSO Council will receive regular updates on progress in the form of a dashboard report that will include information on:

- Information sharing and education
- Professional expectation documents
- Standards reviewed and completed
- EDI training
- Actions toward truth and reconciliation
- Council orientation and education
- Establishment of Governance Committee of Council
- College materials available in French
- Improvement in service experience
- Practice models research

RCDSO | Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario