

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

International Federation of Dental Hygienists (IFDH) – Climbing to new heights

I want to thank my colleagues for electing me to the position of IFDH President. This is the highest honour a professional can receive, to be valued and trusted by your peers. My appreciation goes to the Executive Council (EC) with whom I have served the last 3 years, members of the House of Delegates (HOD) from around the globe and our Administrative Assistant, all of whom have worked diligently for the IFDH. I also want to welcome the new EC, and I look forward to working with you for the next 3 years, as we create our future. Thanks to the Individual Members from around the world for their support and commitment. We want to hear from you!

And in the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years – Abraham Lincoln

A note of appreciation is due to our sponsors and supporters. During the 2010 International Symposium on Dental Hygiene (ISDH) and throughout the last 3 years, our corporate partners have continued to assist the IFDH as we strive to meet the expectations of our communities and stakeholders. I thank *all* of you for your support, but especially our major supporters: Colgate, J & J, P & G, Sunstar, Philips, and Penwell.

As we conclude the 2010 International Symposium on Dental Hygiene (ISDH), we can reflect on the enthusiasm, commitment, fun and success we have achieved during the meeting and the last 3 years. The Organizing Committee of the British Society of Dental Hygiene and Therapy (BSDHT) Association did a fabulous job of organizing a successful Symposium. Our thanks go out to the entire Organizing Committee, staff, speakers and all involved for the years of preparation that made the meeting such a success.

Success is where opportunity meets preparation – Henry Hartman

As we reflect, we can also look towards the future, and to what opportunities present themselves for us as dental hygiene professionals, the IFDH and healthcare in general. We look forward to the next ISDH in South Africa in 2013.

The future is bright for dental hygiene. Some of the things I feel are essential for the profession are: scientific foundations for clinical practice; organizational leadership for quality improvement; clinical scholarship and analytical methods for evidence-based practice; healthcare policy for advocacy in healthcare; interprofessional collaboration for improving patient and population health outcomes; clinical prevention and population health for improving the world's health; and advanced dental hygiene practice.



The best way to predict the future is to create it – Peter F. Drucker

Demographic data show that the population is growing older, and the numbers of dentist are declining. With more people keeping their teeth, and the numbers of dentists decreasing, opportunities abound for dental hygienists to work in varied settings, such as long-term care facilities, hospitals, clinics and in people's homes. With opportunities come responsibilities. We must be ready and educationally prepared to be critical thinkers to fill these roles.

My vision as President is for the IFDH is to evolve and grow as an organization; that we individually and collectively continue to change patients lives by educating them about prevention, wellness and the link between oral health and overall health; that we give back to our communities; that dental hygiene commands the respect it deserves as a preventive profession; and that we mentor those younger than us to be our future leaders and educators.

We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give – Winston Churchill

I am passionate about our profession and our professional association.

My goals for my term as President are: to carry out the directives of the HOD; to increase collaboration with organizations with similar goals to those of the IFDH; to continue our association with the World Health Organization (WHO) and increase our participation with that organization; to be more inclusive of dental hygienists worldwide as an organization; to increase individual and country membership; to facilitate creation of Special Interest Groups (SIGs) to serve better our communities and to increase participation in the IFDH (as the HOD supports this concept); to research the creation of

Regional Groups; and to consider seriously a branding campaign that will clarify and distinguish the IFDH.

Branding is the art of creating a consistent, recognizable and clear unified voice that conveys our organization's uniqueness, focus and values. It constitutes the essence and values of our work, products and services. We will need to revisit our vision, mission and goals and be able to answer the following questions. Who are we? What do we stand for? What are our mission, services and products? Who are our stakeholders? Where is our opportunity? How do we create value? Where are we going? How do we plan to get there? By re-examining our purpose, we can determine if it is still relevant or must be changed as we evolve as an organization.

There are no real secrets to success. Success in anything has one fundamental aspect – effort ... Take action with commitment. – Sam Parker

My hope is not only that the IFDH climb to new heights, but that we *soar* above the mundane to a place of excellence. We are well on our way, based on our previous and newly elected leaders, all of whom display exceptional commitment

to the IFDH and the profession of dental hygiene. Together, we can spread our message of prevention, promote professional alliances, coordinate the exchange of knowledge about the profession, promote access to quality preventive oral health care services, increase public awareness that oral disease can be *prevented*, and in the end, make a *real* difference! We can make miracles happen!

I pledge my unwavering support and commitment as President of the IFDH as we create our future together. Please contact me with ideas, questions and suggestions. Thank you for allowing me the honour of serving as your President. See you in South Africa!

There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle – Albert Einstein

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