



PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Dear friends and colleagues,

The 2010 International Symposium on Dental Hygiene (ISDH) in Glasgow seems like the distant past, was very successful, the Executive Council (EC) and House of Delegates (HOD) continue to work on behalf of the International Federation of Dental Hygienists (IFDH). Thank you to the British Society of Dental Hygiene and Therapy (BSDHT) for a very successful meeting. At this meeting there was a sense of change and moving forward as we embark on new adventures. As Winston Churchill said, 'There is nothing wrong with change, if it is in the right direction'. I believe we are going in the right direction! One of my goals for my term as President is to carry out the directives of the HOD, and here I will review some of those directives.

Realizing that some countries have low per capita income, we discussed these countries as Non-Financial members of the IFDH, based on the World Bank's criteria. 'Any national dental hygienists' association which has a written constitution or articles of incorporation and whose members are recognized by the Federation as representing a substantial proportion of the qualified registered/licensed dental hygienists in that country and, in addition, demonstrates support for the policies of the IFDH, shall be eligible for membership in the Federation.' We also discussed financial support for underdeveloped IFDH member association countries attendance to HOD/ISDH meetings. The HOD expressed their desire to support member associations from underdeveloped countries who do not have financial capacity to sponsor their attendance at the HOD meetings. 'What you leave behind is not what is engraved in stone monuments, but what is woven into the lives of others.' Pericles.

Another action to be implemented is a new membership category for dental hygiene students enrolled in an accredited dental hygiene programme. Engaging dental hygienists when they are students is *essential* to foster new growth for the profession of dental hygiene. Joining the IFDH will allow students to feel connected globally and encourage them to become active in their local associations. Students are our future leaders and must be mentored. Special Interest Groups (SIGs) were discussed and guidelines approved at the HOD meeting. SIGs will provide networks of IFDH members who share common interests and will serve as a vehicle and venue to share professional issues or concerns. This is a part of the

growth process of IFDH. Applications for SIGs are now being accepted, and the potential *Hospital Dental Hygiene SIG* and *Education SIG* met in Glasgow. Other potential SIGs are in the areas of Evidence Based Care, Research, and Tobacco Cessation. Students are encouraged to be SIG members.

As the IFDH meets only triennially, a motion was introduced to investigate creation of Regional Groups within the IFDH, which may include European, North American, Asia/-Pacific, and Africa/Middle East. One of the benefits of this is it would allow member countries to meet more frequently in their geographical areas. This will be researched and guidelines created for discussion and approval of the HOD. The committees of the IFDH are: Nominations, Finance and Development, Education and Research, and Professional and Public Relations. A very successful HOD Workshop was held where the HOD members were provided time to discuss issue pertinent to their countries and to the IFDH. A report on the HOD Workshop is provided in another article.

The IFDH 2010–2013 goals are: strengthen the professional profile of dental hygiene worldwide; increase IFDH membership in all eligible categories; strengthen collaboration with other organizations; support the development and visibility of dental hygiene education; support the dissemination of research by dental hygienists; facilitate communication within the IFDH; and encourage the formation of SIGs. The EC meet monthly by SKYPE, and we have begun implementing the HOD directives. One of the activities we will undertake is to develop a data base of dental hygiene programmes in each country. We will obtain information on the location of programmes, programme director, length of programme, number of students, professional title of graduate, and scope of practice in a country. The International *Dental Hygiene Program and Licensing Survey* has been sent out; please feel free to share this with educational institutions in your country or other countries. This is not limited to IFDH Association Member countries.

A new IFDH website will be launched soon! Significant progress has been made to establish a resource that provides the thesis and contact details of doctoral level dental hygienists to facilitate professional networking. This resource will be incorporated into the 'Research Exchange' area of the website. We will also link to member associations to have access to the



dates, locations and programmes of Annual Meetings and Congresses of the various associations within the IFDH.

The host country for the 2016 ISDH is Switzerland! Congratulations! Thank you to Italy, South Korea, Switzerland, and Switzerland for their excellent proposals. We know the 2013 ISDH will be in Capetown, South Africa, and are already anticipating a wonderful event. Visit <http://www.ohasanet.co.za> to see more about the 2013 ISDH.

As the IFDH matures, we keep moving forward, opening new doors, doing new things, and collaborating with other groups. I encourage you to register with the WHO Health Professions Global Network (HPGN) at <http://www.hpgn.org> to access resources and participate in forum discussions related to

professional health care topics. Think of future aspirations for the IFDH, in the areas of public health, communication, education, research, and enhancing the profession. The IFDH is your association, and we want to hear from you. We can achieve great things...together. Visit our website at <http://www.ifdh.org> and email personally with ideas and suggestions. *'For tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today'.*

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