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International affiliations and connections

As president of DAC, I had the opportunity, with 2nd vice president Daniel Robichaud, to attend the International Federation of Denturists Annual meeting in Helsinki, Finland in September. The IFD meeting was hosted by the Finnish Union of Denturists. The Finnish association, with President Juha-Pekka Marjoranta, vice president Ilkka and Tuula the chief administrative officer, hosted the world's leaders of Denturism to a very well organized event. The DAC would like to thank the Finnish association for the gracious hospitality and hosting us in their beautiful country.

Representatives from nine countries were in attendance at this year's meeting, giving status reports on what is occurring in their countries with regards to the profession.

The IFD is the global voice of Denturism and as such at these meetings, leaders are given the opportunity to exchange ideas, information, and finding solutions to deal with the challenges to improve and expand Denturism.

At our attendance of this international meeting it was evident that many issues which face one country are common to other countries.

In Canada we are truly the leaders of Denturism in the world, our scope of practice, government legislation, and education allow us to practice in manner that all are envious of.

In many countries the opportunity to practice is not a viable option. Either government regulations do not allow for legislation or education is not available for training.

In most countries there is a catch-22 where educators are willing to teach the program, but there is no legislation to allow for the profession; so they are then teaching a course of study which is illegal and they could be prosecuted.

Governments will not usually proceed and legalize a profession that does not have education in place to train and support the profession. So how does Denturism grow in these other nations? These discussions with the representatives of the other members of the IFD make us aware of the complex issues that occur in these countries trying to develop the profession.

Even if the local Denturist association is able to approach government it is a slow, costly process. In most cases before legislation can be enacted,

the government, minister of health, or supporters of the bill change, whereby the process stops. The associations then have to re-aquaint themselves with the new government ministers, lobbyists and start the process again.

The global economic crisis has put pressure on government health services to reform the types of services available and provided to the public. The public, due to the increasing aging population, is looking for efficient access to denture health care without compromising the standard of care. This can be accomplished with the introduction of Denturism to these countries.

This may only be achieved with the support, direction and input from nations like Canada, and others, who have education, legislation and a defined scope of practice in place.

The Canadian Denturist model and perspective have always been very positively accepted by all nations at the IFD meetings. We must continue to contribute and provide opportunities to assist these countries in their bid to legalize Denturism.

We must in Canada, with our own legislation, scope of practice and educational facilities, remain committed to the betterment of our profession. When one sees the struggles that fellow Denturists from around the world have to contend with, it makes us truly proud of the system that has been developed as a role model here in Canada.

We must continue to be aware of the international development of our profession. We should be ready, willing, and able to assist the IFD in being the global voice of Denturism, to be proud of our accomplishments and continue to work together to promote our profession. ▶

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