

# STRATEGIC PLAN

2024 to 2027



**Saskatchewan  
Dental  
Therapists  
Association**



# Current context

In Saskatchewan, dental therapists are governed by the Dental Disciplines Act, 1997 and the Saskatchewan Dental Therapists Association bylaws. All dental therapists wishing to practice in the province of Saskatchewan are required to register and license with the Saskatchewan Dental Therapists Association (SDTA).

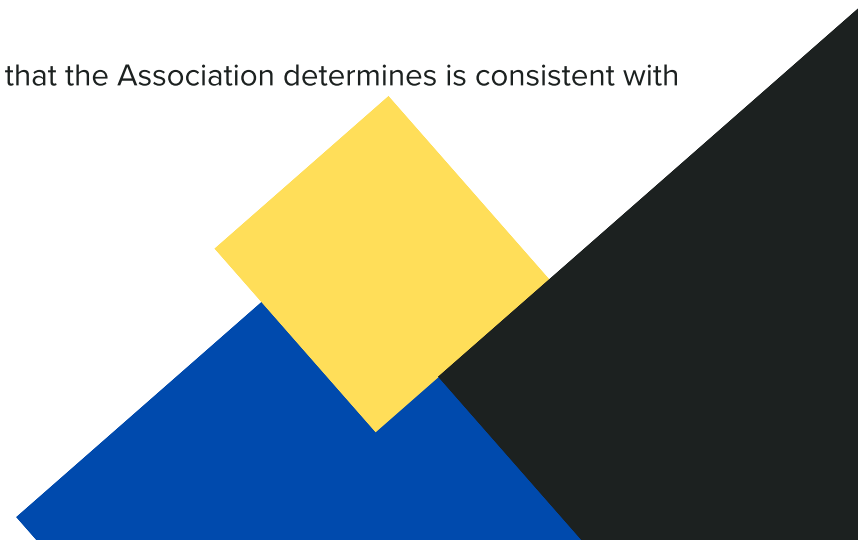
As a self-regulated profession, the SDTA has been granted the statutory responsibility for licensing and regulating its members (registrants). In accordance with the Saskatchewan Dental Therapists bylaws, all practicing and non-practicing members (registrants) must maintain a minimum number of continuing education credits over a three-year period to retain registration and/or license with the Association.


The statutory and primary duty of the Association includes serving and protecting the public. In doing so, the Association must exercise its powers and discharge its responsibilities in the public interest and not in the interest of the members.

*The objects of the Association are:*

- To regulate the practice of the profession and to govern the members in accordance with the Act and the bylaws; and
- To assure the public of the knowledge, skill, proficiency, and competency of members in the practice of the profession.

*To that end, the Association may:*

- Establish, maintain, and enforce standards for registration and of continuing competency and standards of practice for members;
  - Establish, maintain, and enforce a code of ethics for members;
  - Approve programs of study and education for the purposes of registration requirements;
  - Establish and maintain a continuing competency program to promote high practice standards among members; and
  - Carry out any other regulatory activity that the Association determines is consistent with its duty and objects.
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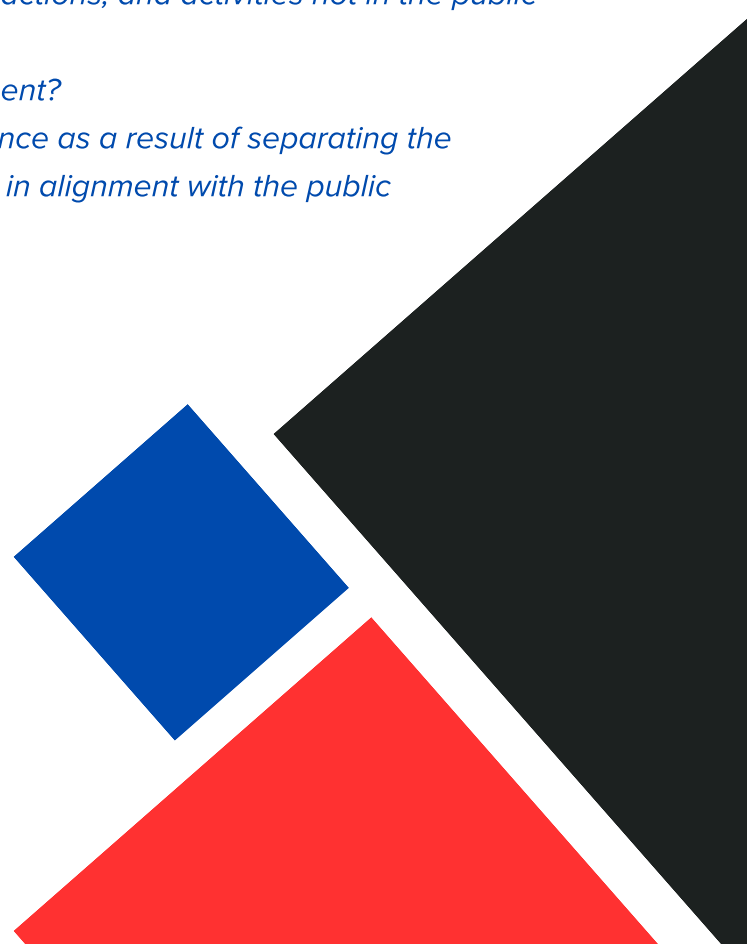
Simply put, at the same time as fulfilling its statutory responsibilities and regulatory functions (public interest), historically, the Association has also provided services to members (registrants) including advocating for and representing the profession of dental therapy, professional development not specifically for meeting continuing education requirements, and providing professional liability insurance for its members, all actions that might be considered matters of professional interest.

In this context, the Council specifically, and the membership, generally, must, first and foremost, consider the identity of the Association. Key questions guiding that conversation, including the current strategic planning process, include:

- *What is the primary mandate of the Association?*
- *What functions and processes that the Association currently engages in and promotes are incompatible with that function?*
- *How might the Association best fulfil its statutory obligations and ensure that the Association is not at risk of losing its statutory status?*
- *What does a separation (divestment) of priorities, actions, and activities not in the public interest mean for the Association?*
- *What are the benefits of undertaking that divestment?*
- *What new challenges will the Association experience as a result of separating the professional interest activities from those that are in alignment with the public interest obligations?*

Within this framework, the Council established the strategic priorities outlined in this document. Embedded in and arising out of the strategic priorities are several capacity building projects.

Advancing these projects will significantly enhance the success of the organization as it strives to fulfill its statutory mandate and vision, as well as advance its mission and values.



# Guiding Principles

## VISION

Through regulatory excellence, dental therapists uphold the highest quality and safety standards of the dental therapy profession in Saskatchewan.

## MISSION

Protecting the public through regulation of the dental therapy profession.

## VALUES

### **Respect for diversity, culture, and individuality**

- Promoting an inclusive environment by engaging successfully with a wide variety of individuals and encourages participation and involvement of others.
- Appreciating different opinions, roles, experiences, and backgrounds.

### **Regulatory accountability and responsibility**

- Enhancing the rigour of regulatory guidelines, professional standards, regulations, and principles
- Demonstrating professional integrity regularly and consistently.

### **Transparency and integrity**

- Strongly upholding organizational values and beliefs.
- Disclosing relevant professional information to inform decision making.

### **Professionalism**

- Demonstrating the behaviours and competency that are expected of the profession and the organization.





# The process

In October 2023, the Council (Board of Directors) of the Saskatchewan Dental Therapists Association engaged in a comprehensive organizational analysis utilizing the Non-profit Lifecycles approach/model originally developed by Susan Kenny Stevens. The model highlights the importance of key capacity areas, or the ‘table legs’ of governance, management, administration, and resources, all of which must be operating in balance to support a non-profit’s programs and mission (the table top).

Diving deeper into each of these capacity areas, two surveys, one completed by Council members and a second survey available to all members of the Association (with 88 respondents) provided extensive data and personal perspectives that the Council utilized as they participated in a robust strategic planning session on October 28, 2023. To articulate strategic priorities outlined in this plan, the Council engaged in appreciative processes to identify key strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results that informed their strategic conversations.

The Council members and sole staff member are dedicated and committed to increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization. That was evidenced through the survey results as well as their active participation and engagement in strategic thinking and brainstorming exercises throughout the process.

The first step in the strategic planning process was for the Council to articulate the vision, mission and values that will guide their decision making and actions over time.

The strategic priorities create an interconnected framework for the development of a subsequent operational and implementation plans, including measures of success, objectives, and actions.

Reporting (accountability) on progress regarding the objectives and actions should occur at regularly scheduled meetings of the Council throughout the lifetime of the strategic plan.

# Overarching Priority

**Affirm the primary function of the Association as the regulatory body for dental therapists in Saskatchewan**

*As the dental therapy profession renews itself and continues to grow, it is imperative that all of the actions and activities of the Association align with the fulfillment of its statutory obligations and regulatory function.*

## Desired Impact

Improved outcomes for the public through clearly stated standards of competence and conduct for dental therapists.

Increased organizational capacity to anticipate and respond to external forces and future challenges with agility, resilience, and openness.

## Actions

**Embrace leading regulatory practices to protect the public.**

- Review, develop, and maintain patient-centred practice standards and guidelines that are clear, consistent, enforceable, and current.
- Establish effective and timely Council review and oversight of standards.

**Utilize leading regulatory practices to enhance regulatory effectiveness, guide strategic decision-making, and improve processes.**

- Update and implement a comprehensive, mandatory quality assurance program so that the public is well-served by competent dental therapists.

# Programs and Services

**Review and affirm the standards of practice, including, but not limited to, the code of ethics and continuing education requirements.**

**Promote the organization's regulatory function with the public.**

*Regular and ongoing review of regulatory practices will ensure alignment with the statutes, as well as national and international best practices and standards, ensuring excellence in dental therapy regulation.*

## Desired Impact

Heightened awareness and levels of understanding of SDTA's statutory mandate, vision, mission, and values.

Streamlined and aligned public and registrant communication.

## Actions

**Conduct a comprehensive current organizational program analysis to ensure alignment with regulatory mandate and mission relevance.**

- Determine which programs and processes are primarily designed for public interest.
- Eliminate and/or transfer responsibility for programs that are designed primarily for member interest .

**Develop a broad-based communication and public relations strategy focussed on raising the status of the dental therapy profession.**

- Revise and update the SDTA website to better reflect the renewed mandate and organizational purposes.

**Identify and strengthen productive relationships with stakeholders.**

- Share information and consult broadly with the public and other healthcare professionals.
- Provide relevant and timely information that the public needs to make informed decisions about the quality of care they receive from dental therapists.
- Communicate and collaborate effectively with related healthcare organizations and regulatory bodies.

# Governance Framework

## Strengthen the governance framework to ensure organizational stability

*Organizational sustainability and stability are enhanced with strong governance structures and processes. Strengthening this foundational framework ensures that SDTA will continue to be recognized for its regulatory function and statutory obligations by its members, partner organizations, the government of Saskatchewan, and the public.*

## Desired Impact

The Council and key staff personnel understand governance, legal and fiduciary responsibilities and operate in accordance with good governance ideals for non-profit organizations with similar mandates and structures.

The Council and key staff personnel exercise their respective leadership roles with clarity, competence, respect, and integrity to ensure SDTA remains stable, focussed, and vital.

Governance structures and processes, including Council committees, are clarified, established, and formalized.

Governance bodies (members/Council) understand their respective governance roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities.

## Actions

Review and update organizational governance structures and Council responsibilities to align with relevant non-profit models of governance.

- Engage in ongoing governance education sessions to design the most effective and efficient governance structure with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
- Undertake a comprehensive review of governing documents (regulatory and administrative bylaws, and board policies).
- Develop a robust governance manual that aligns with best practices of non-profit organizations including:
  - Board of directors (Council) and officer roles and responsibilities,
  - Terms of reference for board committees,
- Enhance organizational functionality and stability through adherence to strong governance policies and practices.
- Review and develop relevant governance policies and practices through a risk/succession lens.



# Operational Priority One

## Affirm a progressive, stable business plan

*Affirming a progressive and solid business plan with corresponding practices, including the financial resources of the organization, provides stability for the organization to permit strengthened delivery of the organizational mission and mandate.*

## Desired Impact

SDTA financial and business plan is perceived with integrity by the public, government officials and members.

Organizational (SDTA) sustainability is enhanced by balancing short and long terms needs with available financial and human resources.

SDTA leadership (Council and management) has a strong sense of economics and financial requirements.

## Actions

Undertake a risk management assessment to ensure organizational stability.

- Review the investment vehicles currently utilized for SDTA reserves.

Develop financial predictions in a timely fashion to enable the Board to assess the proposed activities and develop a long-term financial strategy.

- Create financial budgeting, projection, and reporting tools.
- Develop financial policies to inform and enhance organizational decision making.

Ensure regular, timely, and useful financial information is transparently available to the Council, registrants, and external agencies.

# Operational Priority Two

## Strengthen and expand management and human resource functions of SDTA

*Strengthening and expanding the management human resource structure and supports will improve the delivery of programs and services offered.*

## Desired Impact

Effective, efficient, and responsive management structure to support employed staff and mitigate against burnout.

Systems are continually reassessed for adequacy to keep pace with regulatory and administrative requirements.

## Actions

Assess the human resource capacity needed to support the current and future growth of SDTA.

- Evaluate the workload of current staff
- Identify gaps in skills and knowledge
- Review future staffing needs and create necessary staff and contract positions
- Develop succession plan and contingencies to address key person risk

Strengthen the human resource policies and practices surrounding the Executive Administrator/Registrar role.

- Implement a comprehensive employee success/support program to ensure minimal impact on organization functioning in the event of disruption or personnel change.

Establish clear communication protocols and decision-making lines of authority.

# Operational Priority Three

## Renew and/or create effective and efficient administrative systems and processes

*Streamlining administrative policies and procedures, as well as the creating and formalizing new administrative policies, will professionalize administrative practices and ensure alignment with the organization's mission and values.*

## Desired Impact

Sophisticated administrative systems are in place for competent management and decision-making.

The organization (SDTA) consistently operates from an outlined course of action for routine governance and personnel matters.

Strengthened communication mechanisms exist internally and externally.

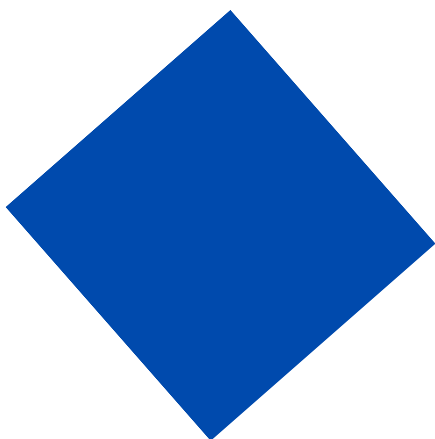
Administrative, financial and communication systems have been updated and professionalized to support SDTA mission and mandate.

## Actions

Review and develop, as required, comprehensive administrative policies and procedures.

- Develop robust financial management policy and procedures
- Create operational policies and procedures manual as identified and required
- Implement a review and update of the human resource policies and practices

Continually reassess administrative, financial and communication systems and processes for adequacy to keep pace with regulatory and administrative needs and requirements.



Contact information  
for the

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