



ACDQ'S MINUTE

Winter 2018

INTRODUCTION

Four issues are of particular concern to us:

- Sun Life Financial's "Provider Search platform"
- the tour on stopping the assignment of benefits
- the regulatory review ("modernization")
- the negotiations with the government on renewing our agreement.

1. SUN LIFE FINANCIAL

For several years now, we have been talking about the risk posed by insurers that attempt to interfere in the dentist-patient relationship.

Here is a new example, this time in Ontario. We know that when a claim is made, Sun Life Financial asks its customers to evaluate, rate and give one or more stars to the health professional consulted, whether it is a dentist, physiotherapist or another professional. The gathered information is then displayed on an online platform. For the time being, the platform is accessible to Sun Life's customers only, but the insurer would like to eventually offer it to all Canadians.

This is no more, nor less than an attempt by Sun Life to build its own network of preferred providers, with all of the abuses that this could cause: potential pressure on patients to consult one dentist rather than another; possible pressure on dentists to offer discounted care to the insurer's customers, etc. We observe this type of practice, particularly in the United States and Europe, wherever dentists have not successfully mobilized in time to protect their professional autonomy.

The best way to resist insurers' interference in our offices is to break off all ties with them, beginning with refusing to accept the assignment of benefits. We are responsible for our patients' **oral health**. **Insurers** have a **commercial** relationship with our patients.

2. THE TOUR ON STOPPING THE ASSIGNMENT OF BENEFITS

For that matter, the ACDQ is conducting a special tour to help dentists stop the assignment of benefits in dental offices. This tour began on February 20 and 21 in the Eastern Townships. At the meetings:

- we explain why it is crucial to refuse to accept the assignment of benefits; as well as
- the difference between the assignment of benefits and Dentaide's direct payment system (dentists are protected by contract; Dentaide acts as an intermediary in the event of a dispute with an insurer);
- we also offer training for dentists and administrative staff on how to stop the assignment of benefits, with the cooperation of patients.

All those who have stopped the assignment of benefits tell us that:

- When well explained, the new office policy is readily accepted by both personnel and patients.
- If you inform patients in advance (before the next appointment or before a specific date), they perfectly understand and everything goes smoothly.
- Personnel have less work. No more worries with insurers. No more calling patients to recover fees.

We must all stand in solidarity and stop the assignment of benefits.

On that note, I invite you to watch [this video](#) (in French) by ACDQ President Dr. Serge Langlois.

3. REGULATORY REVIEW (“MODERNIZATION”)

- The proposal of the Office des professions du Québec (OPQ) aims to allow denturologists and hygienists to perform certain acts “without a prescription,” which are currently reserved for dentists. In other words, completely independently, without the supervision or prior intervention of a dentist.
- The OHDQ is advocating for independent practice by dental hygienists and the Ordre des denturologistes is advocating so that its members may make fixed prostheses on implants.
- **REMINDER–The ACDQ’s position:** *The examinations, diagnoses and treatment plans of dentists are preconditions for any treatment performed by hygienists or denturologists.*
- **REMINDER–**The ODQ is the government’s conversation partner in this matter. At the same time, to make sure that its message is heard, the ACDQ is stepping up its efforts with elected officials and conducting an advertising campaign on the importance of the examination and diagnosis.
- According to our sources, the OPQ’s proposal may be on the verge of becoming a bill. However, with an election looming in the not so distant future, we doubt that the bill will go forward.
- Nevertheless, do not hesitate to speak up. Contact the ODQ member for our region, and tell him/her that examinations and diagnoses are essential before any treatment in order to protect the public. Tell the ODQ member that you support the ACDQ’s position. Tell him/her that you are counting on the ODQ to send the right message to the government.

4. NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT • AGREEMENT WITH THE RAMQ

- Our agreement expired on April 1, 2015.
- The ACDQ’s demands were presented to the MSSS on May 23, 2017.
- The ACDQ has had three meetings to date with MSSS representatives.
- In February, the ACDQ surveyed its members on the pressure tactics that should be used in the coming months.

- Non-participation is one of the tactics considered. In 2008 and 2012, the announcement of dentists' potential non-participation in the RAMQ was enough to convince the government to negotiate and come to an agreement.
- **Until this matter is settled:** Stay mobilized and read the communiqués.

CONCLUSION

- **Insurers**—We have a therapeutic relationship with our patients. Insurers have a commercial relationship with them.
- **Assignment of benefits**—By refusing to accept the assignment of benefits, we protect our professional autonomy. We must all refuse the assignment of benefits to put heavy pressure on insurers. Dentaide is different than the assignment of benefits, because you are protected by contract. In the event of a dispute with the insurer, Dentaide acts as an intermediary.
- **Regulatory review (“modernization”)**—*The examinations, diagnoses and treatment plans of dentists are preconditions for any treatment performed by hygienists or denturologists. The ACDQ is continuing its efforts with the ODQ and the government. On your end, talk to your ODQ representative about it.*
- **Negotiation with the MSSS**—Let's stay mobilized in dealings with the government. In the coming months, we may move forward with non-participation in the RAMQ if required by the circumstances. Let's be ready.