

## Background

In December 2023, members of the CSDH Board of Directors met with the Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario (RCDSO) highlighting the need for expanded training for oral health care (OHC) providers to address complexity of care for people living with disabilities (PLWD).

Subsequently, the CSDH Special Olympics (SO) committee introduced RCDSO to Brock Reissner, Manager, Health and Research Initiatives for Special Olympics Ontario (SOO). Brock presented a proposal to the RCDSO Quality Assurance committee that training modules and courses required for volunteering with SO would be regarded for CE credit. In March 2024, the RCDSO recognized SOO as an approved sponsor for the purpose of CE credits in Ontario. Their full announcement is shown below.

The CSDH SO committee plans on using this initiative as a model to encourage all Canadian oral health colleges to emulate and evolve continuing education for PLWD to new heights.

## Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario (RCDSO) Approves Special Olympics Ontario as an approved CE Sponsor

On December 7<sup>th</sup> 2023, Council of the RCSDO heard from the CSDH. In follow up to that meeting, staff and representatives from CSDH continued to explore partnering on continuing education opportunities for dentists.

On March 5<sup>th</sup> 2024, the Quality Assurance Committee recognized Special Olympics Ontario (SOO) as an approved sponsor for the purpose of CE credits in Ontario. The Quality Assurance program is mandated under the Regulated Health Professionals Act (RHPA) to ensure the ongoing competence and education of RCDSO registrants and this was a great step for Access to Care and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (ED)I.

This means that now Dentists who complete modules through Special Olympics Ontario will earn CE points. Dentists are also able to leverage coaching, mentoring, and training that they complete while volunteering with Special Olympics



### HEALTHY ATHLETES UNCOVERS HEALTH ISSUES



According to SOO,

- Over 80% of healthcare providers are not professionally trained to treat people with intellectual disabilities
- People with intellectual differences die 16 years prematurely because of undiagnosed and untreated conditions
- In North America, on a team of 10 athletes, on average 2 have untreated tooth decay and 1 needs an urgent referral to a dentist.

SOO offers programs to athletes from age 2 – 88 years young. Athletes must have an intellectual disability and may have multiple disabilities. SOO serves tens of thousands of athletes in Ontario. Not only do they provide sport programming, but they also consider themselves to be a leader in health care, health screenings, and linking persons with intellectual disabilities to health providers.

SOO offers several modules and opportunities for dentists to learn more about treating patients with disabilities including the Healthy Athletes initiative, Partners in Health Training, and Special Smiles volunteer program.

This was great collaborative teamwork between our Quality Team, Access to Care, and EDI projects.

“This was one of those pivotal moments that has the potential to significantly advance inclusive and accessible care”  
Susan Taylor, Director, Quality

“This is another action by the RCDSO to work with system partners in our commitment to find innovative solutions to improve access to oral health care for all Ontarians.”

Dan Faulkner, RCDSO Registrar/CEO

