

CCSIP Collaborative Event: Creating a Canada-California Digital Learning Network to Attract, Develop and Retain Dentistry Talent

In 2009, the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) Center for Health Policy Research reported on the growing shortage of dentists in California and around the world. Researchers noted key challenges such as the anticipated retirement of many experienced practitioners and the reluctance of new dentists to practice in remote and under-served areas—where they are needed most.

Researchers from the University of California San Francisco and the Universities of British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Alberta are pooling their expertise to address these issues. With support from CCSIP, the bilateral team aims to develop an innovative model of continuing education that leverages online technologies and social networking tools, and enhances the professional development of dentists.

The researchers will host a Canada-California Digital Learning Symposium that brings together students, practitioners, educators, technology development companies, and the Canadian, BC and California Dental Associations. Participants will explore online and in-person activities that improve collaboration, knowledge and skills development, online training and practice-sharing in the dental profession.

The outcomes of this event will support the development of new continuing education tools, approaches and research networks that improve the quality and reduce the cost of dental training. For example: oral cancer screening techniques that are taught via a virtual classroom to practicing dentists in any location.

Longer-term, this bilateral collaboration could accelerate the development of highly skilled dentists required by Canada and California; increase the use of new technologies in the dental profession; and enhance the quality of patient care.

