

NEWS RELEASE

BCDA LAUNCHES NEW ORAL HEALTH FOUNDATION

BCDA and UBC Dentistry announce renewed partnership to advance Save a Smile program and continue providing urgent dental care for vulnerable children across British Columbia

VANCOUVER, BC - JUNE 29, 2026 The British Columbia Dental Association (BCDA) has launched the BCDA Oral Health Foundation, a new charitable entity focusing on improving access to oral health care for British Columbians in need.

The Foundation will continue to work with the UBC Faculty of Dentistry through the long-standing Save a Smile program, a 35-year initiative that has supported access to urgent dental care for children in need across British Columbia.

Historically delivered through a partnership between the BCDA and UBC Dentistry, the Save a Smile program will now transition to a new model under which administration of the program's operating funds will be managed by the BCDA Oral Health Foundation. The new structure is intended to create a more streamlined, flexible, and sustainable approach to funding clinical care for children in need.

UBC will continue to steward the Alec Gunning Save a Smile Endowment Fund, established by the estate of Dr. Alec Gunning, a Victoria dentist who believed strongly in early dental care for young children. The Endowment Fund will support related education and research activities within the Faculty of Dentistry.

This evolution reflects the shared commitment of the BCDA and UBC Dentistry to strengthen the long-term impact and sustainability of Save a Smile. Since its inception, the program has provided more than \$1.9 million in dental care to over 3,000 children across British Columbia, with participation from more than 125 volunteer dentists province-wide.

Save a Smile requires approximately \$180,000 annually to meet the growing demand for urgent dental care. The establishment of the Foundation will help support dedicated fundraising efforts and strengthen long-term program sustainability.

Over time, the BCDA Oral Health Foundation may also expand to support additional oral health initiatives aimed at improving access to care across the province.

For more information about the BCDA Oral Health Foundation or to donate, visit www.bcdaooralhealthfoundation.ca

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Quotes:

- *"Save a Smile has always represented the heart of our profession, ensuring every child can access urgent dental care, regardless of circumstance. This new Foundation reflects our commitment to growing that impact and strengthening the BCDA's collaboration with UBC Dentistry for years to come."*

- Dr. Jillian Belbin, President, BCDA

- *"UBC Dentistry is proud to support the future of Save a Smile through ongoing stewardship of the Endowment Fund. This renewed partnership between UBC Dentistry and the BCDA ensures that research, education, and clinical care continue to align in support of BC's most vulnerable children."*

- Dr. Andrea Esteves, Dean pro tem, UBC Faculty of Dentistry

- *"We are very excited to launch the Foundation, both for the future of the Save a Smile program, and for the broader opportunities it creates to expand access to oral health care across the province. This new structure allows us to ensure funds are directed where they can make the greatest impact."*

- Dr. Angelique Leung, Chair, BCDA Save a Smile Committee



BC DENTAL ASSOCIATION

**Oral Health
Foundation**

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