

# National Volunteer Week



## Volunteer Interview

Dan Mead, CPO(c) – President, Orthotics Prosthetics Canada

In honour of National Volunteer Week and in recognition of the critical role volunteers play in the operations of Orthotics Prosthetics Canada (OPC), we interviewed current OPC President Dan Mead about his volunteer experience with OPC.

**Q. You pretty well jumped into volunteering in the profession even before you received your credential. Why?**

*DM: I believe it is very important to support the profession by investing time in helping it to move forward. It is important to understand that we, as the professionals, should set the direction for the profession and contribute to helping move there.*

**Q. You have been in the President role since OPC came into being four years ago and on the CAPO Board even before that. Your role of President is coming to an end. How do you feel about that and how has the experience been?**

*DM: I enjoyed being President. It has been a rewarding experience to meet and work with colleagues across the country and get to know them on a professional and personal level. It is exciting to see the evolution of the profession in terms of maturity and focusing on important and priority initiatives. We have made good headway in a number of areas over the past several years, including communications, exam updating, advocacy and more. It will be different to not be President for sure, however, it is important to step aside and allow others to take the mantle and have new leadership with fresh perspectives.*

**Q. When the Nomination Committee or others ask people to join the Board or a Committee, the most frequent response is that they do not have enough time. Can you speak to the time required to be a Board member?**

*DM: People say that to me all the time, but it isn't what they think. The time required is not as extensive as people believe. Perhaps the reaction comes from perceptions from days gone by, but OPC is a different organization than what CAPO and CBCPO used to be. We have a professional office staff and the daily requirements are taken care of by the staff. That frees up the volunteers to use their time in areas where their expertise is required.*

*On the OPC Board, we have one face-to-face meeting a year and quarterly conference calls that take a couple of hours each. The face-to-face you are away for a couple of days and the conference calls are not too intrusive at all. There may be some extra work leading up to a big meeting or event, but nothing that should scare anyone away. Any additional activity is related to special projects that are no different*

*than other activities that people choose to be involved with outside of their work hours. You are not signing up for a part time job by volunteering for OPC.*

*Is there is an opportunity cost to the business by the time spent in volunteering? Perhaps that is one perspective, but another is helping the profession to grow which inevitably would be good for the business. A practice cannot succeed on its own. The profession needs to flourish for practices to be successful.*

**Q. What do volunteers mean to OPC?**

*DM: They are the lifeblood or backbone of the OPC organization. The number of volunteers active in OPC is a healthy percentage of the entire membership. If you do not have the volunteers, you cannot achieve what OPC has achieved. OPC cannot deliver on the promise of advancement, credentialing, regulation, and other priorities without the volunteers.*

*It is a difficult field to get into but it is an easy field to love and feel passionate about. That is where the volunteerism can be so rewarding.*

**Q. When your Presidency term is up, you will be taking on the Chair role of the Nominations Committee. That Committee has a new mandate related to volunteer leadership. What is involved with that?**

*DM: We want to help our volunteers grow and evolve. People development is important and desired. We want to do what we can to support members that volunteer to give back to OPC and help them grow in their careers and personally. The volunteer leadership program will help OPC be better at all aspects involving volunteers including recruiting, retaining, recognizing and more. We want to ensure the volunteer experience with OPC is enjoyable.*

**Q. Any parting Words**

*DM: We need to leverage the position we hold in the health care environment. We are respected, but we need to be more confident in protecting our space in the name of public protection. There needs to be boundaries for where expertise starts and stops. All health professions have areas of specialities where relevant expertise is appropriate. When professions step outside of those boundaries, patient safety is jeopardized and they are not getting appropriate care. It is not a comfortable thing for us to do but if we do not set the boundaries ourselves, someone else will set them for us.*