Opioids and the Dental Professional
Dr. Maria van Harten

PROGRAM OUTLINE
Canada is experiencing an opioid crisis that is testing the responsiveness of and coordination between healthcare providers, emergency responders, public health, policing and governments. Statistics paint a grim and worrisome picture of current opioid use, and the news stories tell of the insidious history behind the overdoses and deaths in the headlines. Stakeholders at all levels are pulling together to try and manage the challenges with both prescription and illicit opioids circulating on the street. Is there a role to play for the dental professional, and if so, what might it look like?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

• To review the drugs classified as opioids and their mechanism of action
• To suggest historical events and factors which may have led to the current opioid crisis
• To recognize clinical, specifically oral, conditions which may assist in identifying the opioid user
• To describe opioid use locally, in Ontario and in Canada
• To summarize the general actions and strategies planned by governments, public health, and health professional bodies to help manage the opioid crisis
• To become familiar with the Royal College of Dental Surgeons’ guidelines on The Role of Opioids in the Management of Acute and Chronic Pain and gain an understanding of how better to apply these guidelines to everyday practice
• To suggest referral pathways for the opioid user for appropriate addiction treatment

LOCATION
Ivey Spencer Leadership Centre
551 Windermere Road
London, Ontario N5X 2T1

CREDITS
Category 2; MCDE 3; AGD Code 130; 3 hours

ABOUT THE SPEAKER
MARIA van HARTEN, BSc, BEd, DDS, MSc (DPH)

Before becoming a dentist, Maria van Harten completed a Bachelor of Science at the University of Waterloo and a Bachelor of Education at Queen’s University’s Teachers College. She finished dental school at Western University in 2000 and worked in private practice as an associate, sole proprietor and jail dentist until 2010. Maria left private practice to do her Masters in Dental Public Health, and served as both Dental Consultant and Clinical Dentist in the public health system until the fall of 2017. She is an examiner for her specialty with the Royal College of Dentists of Canada. Maria is a past President of the Ontario Association of Public Health Dentistry and continues to participate on its Executive Committee.

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