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Media Release

Dental Hygienists Call on Federal Government to Provide Strong Support for Tobacco Control

April 17, 2012 (Ottawa, ON) — Canada's Federal Tobacco Control Strategy (FTCS) has resulted in significant reductions in the levels of tobacco use in Canada. This has led to our nation being recognized as a world leader in tobacco control. The Smoking Cessation Quitline is just one of many highly successful programs the federal government has supported to this end. Unfortunately, significant financial cuts are being made to the FTCS.

The Canadian Dental Hygienists Association (CDHA) supports ongoing, stable funding for the FTCS in order to further reduce tobacco use levels in Canada. With the anticipated reduction in Health Canada's tobacco control funding, Canada is at risk of reversing the downward trend in tobacco use. Elimination of the grants and contributions program will result in reduced involvement with non-profit partners who have made tobacco cessation a high priority. These partnerships are successful because partner organizations are uniquely equipped to meet the specialized health needs of different communities and priority populations across Canada.

On a daily basis, dental hygienists see first-hand, the harmful impact of tobacco use on the mouth. CDHA's president Arlynn Brodie says, "dental hygienists are committed to encouraging tobacco free lifestyles and to promoting cessation." In many cases dental hygienists are the first to recognize signs of oral cancer from tobacco use, as well as tooth decay and abrasion caused by chewing tobacco. "All types of tobacco use have a negative impact on oral health," adds Brodie, "dental hygienists focus on prevention and strongly believe continued investment in the FTCS will ultimately provide cost savings to the health system down the road".

CDHA has published a joint policy document on [The Role of Health Professionals in Tobacco Cessation](#) as well as a position paper titled [Tobacco Use Cessation and the Role of the Dental Hygienist](#).

Serving the profession since 1963, CDHA is the collective national voice of more than 24,000 registered dental hygienists working in Canada, directly representing 16,500 individual members

including dental hygienists and students. Dental hygiene is the 6th largest registered health profession in Canada with professionals working in a variety of settings, with people of all ages, addressing issues related to oral health. For more information on oral health, visit: www.cdha.ca

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