



THE CANADIAN DENTAL
HYGIENISTS ASSOCIATION
L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE
DES HYGIÉNISTES DENTAIRES

For immediate release (Offert en français sur demande)

Media Release

Dental Hygienists Support Enhanced Federal Funding for Territorial Health

March 24, 2017 (Ottawa) – The Canadian Dental Hygienists Association (CDHA) supports the federal government's enhanced investments in the Territorial Health Investment Fund, as outlined in Budget 2017. This funding will improve access to health services in the territories—including children's oral health services—and will reduce reliance on medical transport outside the region for treatment. A total of \$108 million will be added to the fund over four years, with \$54 million allocated to Nunavut, \$28.4 million to the Northwest Territories, and \$25.6 million to Yukon.

As CDHA president Gerry Cool explains, "Residents in rural and remote communities face unique challenges to accessing health care services. As a result, they must often travel from their communities to urban centres for more costly and invasive treatments." Research has demonstrated, for example, that day surgery rates for the treatment of early childhood tooth decay are more than 3 times higher for children in rural areas of the country and more than 8 times higher for children from Indigenous communities. Cool adds, "This matter has been of concern to dental hygienists because most oral diseases can be prevented in community-based settings. The Territorial Health Investment Fund helps address these concerns."

Dental hygienists are uniquely positioned to deliver preventive and therapeutic oral health services directly to individuals in northern communities. In recent years, CDHA has partnered with the Government of Nunavut to provide onsite preventive and therapeutic dental hygiene services to children between the ages of 0 and 7 residing in 19 Nunavut communities. Preliminary data from the project show that the work of dental hygienists in the North is helping to alleviate the needless pain and suffering experienced by these children. "CDHA strongly believes that all Canadians, including children, should have access to timely oral health care in their communities. This approach will ultimately decrease hospital and treatment costs while improving the oral health of Canadians," says Cool.

Serving the profession since 1963, CDHA is the collective national voice of more than 28,495 registered dental hygienists working in Canada, directly representing 18,000 individual members including dental hygienists and students. Dental hygiene is the sixth largest registered health profession in Canada with professionals working in a variety of settings, including independent dental hygiene practice, with people of all ages, addressing issues related to oral health. For more information on oral health, visit www.dentalhygienecanada.ca.

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