



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

For immediate release (Offert en français sur demande)

## Media Release

### Dental Hygienists Call for Exemption on Treatment of Spouses

September 19, 2019 (Ottawa, ON) — In response to recent media coverage of an Ontario registered dental hygienist who lost his appeal to the Ontario Divisional Court to have his 5-year licence revocation for treating his wife overturned, the Canadian Dental Hygienists Association (CDHA) is strongly urging the government of Ontario to grant the same exemption for spousal treatment to dental hygienists as they have for dentists.

Currently, the professional misconduct provisions of the Regulated Health Professions Act (RHPA) prohibit dental hygienists from providing dental hygiene services to spouses. Yet, as self-regulated health professionals within the RHPA, dental hygienists are well educated in their ethical obligations regarding the treatment of ALL clients. The restriction on spousal treatment also limits access to oral care for people, particularly in rural and Northern communities. Furthermore, it prohibits autonomy of the client to choose their preferred dental hygiene provider.

In 2015, The College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario voted in favour of a spousal exemption, but its request continues to be ignored by the provincial government, despite the Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario being granted this exemption in 2014. Dentists are, in fact, the only health care profession in the province to have been granted this exemption. Ontario is one of only two provinces in Canada where dental hygienists are restricted in this manner.

“It is time for government to prevent any further drastic sanctions and hardships for regulated dental hygienists”, states Ondina Love, CEO, CDHA. “The charge in this case brands the individual as a sexual abuser—an unfair characterization of this health care professional” Ontario dental hygienists, and their supporters, are being encouraged to voice their concern by submitting letters to MPPs and posting on social media to emphasize the critical importance of this decision that will make our health care system more accessible and efficient. [www.cdha.ca/IssueResponse](http://www.cdha.ca/IssueResponse)

CDHA is the collective national voice of more than 29,549 dental hygienists working in Canada, directly representing 20,000 individual members, including students. Since 1963, CDHA has worked to advance the profession and promote the importance of oral health. 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](http://www.dentalhygienecanada.ca).

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