



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

For immediate release (Offert en français sur demande)

## Media Release

### Oral Health Care a Must for Canada's Long-Term Care Homes

February 2, 2022 (Ottawa, ON) — According to a national poll conducted by Abacus Data for the Canadian Dental Hygienists Association (CDHA), nearly all Canadians believe that oral health care should be included in the new national standards for long-term care. Most Canadians also give the current state of oral care for older adults and seniors a poor rating.

The poll of 2,200 Canadian residents, conducted between January 7 and 12, revealed that 88% would like to see oral health care incorporated into the federal government's long-awaited national standards for long-term care homes. A majority (over 50%) also recognize that seniors face many challenges when it comes to accessing professional oral health care. [These findings](#) support CDHA's call to action on seniors' oral health detailed in its [discussion paper recommendations](#) released today.

As essential primary health care providers, dental hygienists know that seniors living in long-term care homes have many unmet oral health needs, which put their overall health at risk. "Untreated oral conditions and diseases can cause pain, discomfort, difficulties chewing and swallowing, and are associated with heart and lung diseases, diabetes, and stroke," explains CDHA President Wendy Stewart. "We simply cannot continue to ignore the oral health needs of this vulnerable population." Among CDHA's urgent recommendations for improving the lives of Canada's 400,000 residents in long-term care are the addition of dental hygienists to staff care teams across the country. These dental hygienists would be responsible for developing comprehensive oral health care programs for residents as well as oral health education programs for workers.

"CDHA urges the federal government to incorporate oral hygiene services (including oral health assessments, personalized oral health care plans, and daily mouth care) into its forthcoming standards for long-term care, and to make targeted investments, in collaboration with the provinces, to support this change." Jean Sych, age 91, agrees. "I think it's very important for seniors to have oral hygiene care...It's very important for your oral health and your well-being...I really hope that the government will help seniors," says Sych.

To learn more about the recent Abacus poll findings, CDHA's five recommendations for addressing oral health in long-term care, and how the public can get involved to help improve access to care for Canada's seniors, visit [cdha.ca/oralhealthforseniors](https://cdha.ca/oralhealthforseniors).

CDHA is the collective national voice of more than 30,000 dental hygienists in Canada, directly representing 21,000 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 regulated 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 [dentalhygienecanada.ca](https://dentalhygienecanada.ca).

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