



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

For immediate release (Offert en français sur demande)

Media Release

Oral Health Deemed Essential to Quality of Life in Long-Term Care

February 1, 2023 (Ottawa, ON) — The Canadian Dental Hygienists Association (CDHA) applauds the release of the updated *Long-Term Care Services* standard by the Health Standards Organization (HSO). This standard, produced following extensive research and consultations with stakeholders including dental hygienists, upholds high-quality resident-centred care, promotes good governance, and aims to foster a healthy and competent workforce in long-term care (LTC) homes across Canada.

“Seniors’ oral health has been a long-standing priority for CDHA, which is why we welcomed the opportunity to participate in the national discussion of ways to improve the quality of life of people living in LTC homes,” states Anne Caissie, president of CDHA. One of the recommendations made by the association and accepted by HSO was the inclusion of oral health assessments in the evaluation of each resident’s physical health needs. “Dental hygienists know that oral health is vital for overall health and well-being. These assessments will help to prevent tooth decay, gum disease, and oral lesions which, left untreated, can lead to more serious and potentially life-threatening medical conditions,” Caissie explains.

As essential primary health care professionals, dental hygienists working in LTC homes identify many oral health issues that are not spotted by other health professionals. Ensuring that they are added to interdisciplinary care teams across the country will help to meet the oral health needs of Canada’s aging population. Just as importantly, it will alleviate some of the workload of LTC nurses and support workers. “I believe that this new national standard will have a huge impact on the health of the LTC residents that I see every week,” adds Caissie. CDHA’s ongoing advocacy on behalf of seniors will now expand to promote the recommendations in the standard and the critical contribution that dental hygienists can make to quality of life in LTC homes.

CDHA is the collective national voice of more than 31,000 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.

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