



COVID-19 Update for CDHA Members **December 17, 2020**

CDHA is Here to Help

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Email us: alerts@cdha.ca

Dear member,

New CDHA statement: Registered Dental Hygienists Are Essential Primary Health Care Professionals

CDHA's board of directors has recently approved a statement that dental hygienists, as primary health care professionals, play a critical role in public and population health and should be considered essential workers. Such recognition would give dental hygienists priority access to government distribution of PPE and access to vaccines alongside other essential workers, both of which will help to ensure the health and safety of dental hygienists and their patients/clients. The full statement is available [here](#).

Advocating for vaccine priority for oral health care professionals

With the initial vaccine approvals and Canada's COVID-19 immunization campaigns underway, CDHA is advocating for dental hygienists and other members of the oral health care team to be included in decision making regarding the prioritization of COVID-19 immunizations. CDHA's key messages to the federal and provincial governments emphasize that dental hygienists and other members of the dental team are at increased risk due to direct physical contact with patients/clients. A [recent study published](#) by the *American Journal of Industrial Medicine* reported that "the disease burden of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is not uniform across occupations," and that dental hygienists, dental assistants, and dentists were the most at risk due to their close proximity and prolonged exposure to patients while providing dental and oral care.

THE CANADIAN DENTAL HYGIENISTS ASSOCIATION
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CDHA's constituent provincial associations are working to ensure that this advocacy is amplified at the provincial level. A joint message regarding the importance of priority access has also been issued by CDHA and the Canadian Dental Association.

Updated guidelines on aerosol transmission

In November, the **Public Health Agency of Canada**, following its counterparts at [WHO](#) and [CDC](#), updated its [COVID-19: Main modes of transmission](#) webpage to reflect that research now shows that COVID-19 may be spread via aerosols from activities such as talking, singing, coughing, sneezing, and shouting. Aerosols can travel farther and remain suspended in the air longer than droplets, which are larger in size and fall to the ground rapidly. Previously, it was thought that transmission came from droplet exposure and from contact with surfaces or objects with the virus on it. Factors that contribute to COVID-19 transmission in an office setting are 1) being in close proximity to others for an extended period, 2) not wearing a mask, and 3) inadequate ventilation systems. Please also read *The Lancet's* editorial, "[COVID-19 transmission—up in the air.](#)"

Webcast by the Public Health Agency of Canada: Recommendations of the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) on the use of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine

The National Collaborating Centre for Infectious Diseases (NCCID) is hosting a webinar on Friday, December 18, from 12:30–13:30 ET to inform health care providers of the NACI recommendations on the use of this COVID-19 vaccine. There will be a live Q&A session with the speakers following the presentations. The English recording will be made available on the NCCID website immediately following the event. Click [here](#) for more information.

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*Please be well and take care of yourselves in this difficult time.
Everyone can do their part to slow COVID-19.*

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