



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

For immediate release (Offert en français sur demande)

Media Release

Jobs Report Highlights Concerning Trend for Health Benefits Tied to Employment in Canada

May 8, 2020 (Ottawa, ON) — Today's national employment numbers indicate that 2 million more Canadians are unemployed and seeking work as of April. The Canadian Dental Hygienists Association (CDHA) is calling on employers to maintain workplace-sponsored health and dental benefits so that Canadians can continue receiving the services and treatments they need for good oral and overall health.

"In Canada, losing a job can often mean losing employer-sponsored health and dental benefits in addition to your income. These benefits ensure access to preventive oral health care for millions of Canadians, and it is critical that this coverage be maintained," said Leanne Huvenaars, president of CDHA. "A recent survey commissioned by CDHA showed that 4 in 10 Canadians do not have access to dental benefits. We know that those without private insurance tend to have poorer oral health outcomes, which places pressure on acute care settings that are already strained."

Governments across the country are taking steps to ensure that workers can maintain their employment status and their benefits, but many Canadians are falling through the cracks. A system of national, public oral health care would prevent this situation from occurring in the future, but in the short term it is critical that employers allow their employees to keep their benefits plans. Alternatives to workplace-sponsored health and dental benefits for Canadians are scarce, which means many who have just lost their jobs will have to pay out of pocket, buy private insurance or go without access to preventive care until they qualify for benefits in a new job.

"We hope all employers will continue providing these essential benefits so that Canadians can receive the oral health care they need while we work towards a more universal approach nationally," said Huvenaars.

CDHA is the collective national voice of more than 29,251 dental hygienists 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.

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