



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

For immediate release (Offert en français sur demande)

## Media Release

# **New National Polling Shows Strong Support for Prevention-Focused Dental Hygiene Care While Gaps in Access to Care Persist**

February 26, 2026 (Ottawa, ON) — New national public opinion research released today by the Canadian Dental Hygienists Association (CDHA) shows Canadians place exceptionally high trust in dental hygienists and strongly support prevention-focused dental hygiene care, while also acknowledging that barriers to access remain. The polling, conducted by Abacus Data, found that 96 per cent of Canadians hold a positive impression of dental hygienists, with more than eight in ten viewing them as an essential or important part of the health care system. These findings underscore the central role dental hygienists play in prevention, early disease detection, and the maintenance of oral and overall health.

Canadians are also united in their belief that prevention should be the foundation of dental care policy. Eight in ten believe federal funding should prioritize preventive dental care, either exclusively or alongside restorative services, and nearly nine in ten agree that investing in prevention is the most effective way to reduce both short and long-term health system costs. However, the data makes clear that affordability remains the single biggest barrier to care, with nearly half of Canadians saying cost still prevents them from accessing dental services as often as they need—an issue affecting even those who have some form of dental coverage.

The polling highlights strong awareness and broad support for the Canadian Dental Care Plan (CDCP), with 85% being aware of the plan and 92% believing it has improved access to care. Early experiences among users have been largely positive, including improved access to services and coverage that meet patient needs. At the same time, the findings point to challenges, including delays in appointments, wait times, and difficulty finding participating providers for some Canadians, demonstrating that while progress has been made, gaps in the system persist.

“Canadians are sending a clear message: they trust dental hygienists, they value prevention, and they want oral health to be treated as an essential part of health care,” said Donna Lee, President of the Canadian Dental Hygienists Association. The Canadian Dental Care Plan is an important step forward, but affordability and access issues must continue to be addressed to close these gaps and ensure oral health care is accessible, equitable, and treated as essential health care for everyone. “Dental hygienists are prevention experts”, adds Lee, “and we are ready to play an even greater role in strengthening Canada’s health system, improving access to care, and advancing health equity for people in every community.”

### **About the Canadian Dental Hygienists Association (CDHA):**

CDHA is the national voice of dental hygienists in Canada. Representing more than 35,000 dental hygienists across the country, CDHA advocates for the advancement and promotion of the dental hygiene profession while maintaining a commitment to the public's oral health. Dental hygiene is the seventh largest regulated health profession in Canada, with professionals working as practitioners, practice owners, educators, researchers, administrators, and more. Dental hygienists are a pivotal component of Canada’s health care landscape; dedicated to improving oral health and overall well-being. For more information on oral health, visit [dentalhygienecanada.ca](https://dentalhygienecanada.ca). For more information on the work of CDHA, visit [cdha.ca](https://cdha.ca).

### **Media Contact**

Angie D’Aoust, Director of Marketing and Communications

613-878-3607

[adaoust@cdha.ca](mailto:adaoust@cdha.ca)



<https://linktr.ee/thecdha>