



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

For immediate release (Offert en français sur demande)

Media Release

CDHA calls for a stronger focus on prevention in the CDCP

October 6, 2026 (Ottawa, ON) — The Canadian Dental Hygienists Association (CDHA) welcomes the release of the Canadian Dental Association's (CDA) report, *From Coverage to Care: An Evidence-Informed Assessment of the Canadian Dental Care Plan (CDCP)* and agrees that the CDCP has significantly improved access to oral health care for Canadians.

Findings from CDHA's January 2026 survey of 1,543 dental hygienists support many of the report's conclusions and provide the perspective of providers who deliver care to CDCP patients across Canada. Nearly 80% of respondents reported increased patient access to care through the CDCP, and almost half indicated that many of their CDCP patients had not received oral health care in more than five years or had never previously accessed care.

"CDHA agrees with the CDA that the CDCP is improving access to oral health care and changing lives," said Wendy Wells, CDHA President. "Dental hygienists are seeing Canadians return to oral health care after years without access. As the program evolves, prevention, education, and early interventions should be key priorities."

CDHA's [public opinion research](#) conducted by Abacus Data found that 87% of Canadians support the CDCP, 92% believe it will improve access to oral health care, 92% of program users report improved access to care, and 73% report receiving services they previously could not access. These findings demonstrate the program's positive impact on Canadians' ability to obtain oral health care.

Prevention must be a priority

While the CDA report highlights mutual issues of concern related to administration, affordability, and workforce planning, CDHA's January 2026 survey identified preventive oral health services as a crucial consideration for the program's ongoing development.

Survey respondents frequently cited limits on scaling and root planing services, restrictions on preventive benefits, and challenges associated with preauthorization processes for clinically necessary dental hygiene care. Many also reported delays or difficulties obtaining approval for additional services despite documented clinical evidence.

Consistent with its longstanding focus on prevention, CDHA recommends broader coverage for evidence-informed preventive services, including:

- Recognition of dental hygienists' examinations as distinct from the annual examination limits applied to patients;
- Enhanced periodontal disease prevention and maintenance services, including scaling and root planing;
- Personalized oral health education and behaviour-change support; and
- Oral health promotion counselling related to tobacco use, nutrition, xerostomia, diabetes, and other chronic health conditions.

"Oral health education and prevention are among the most effective investments we can make for better health outcomes," said Wells. "These services help identify disease earlier, improve oral health literacy, support healthier behaviours, and may reduce the need for more complex treatment."

CDHA's survey also identified ongoing challenges related to administration and patient understanding of the program. Almost half of the respondents described preauthorization requirements as very demanding. More than three-quarters reported that patients mistakenly believed the CDCP would provide completely free care, highlighting the need for clearer communication about coverage, eligibility, renewals, and out-of-pocket costs.

CDHA supports the continued evolution of the CDCP and looks forward to working with the federal government, oral health organizations, and other stakeholders to strengthen the program. The strongest path forward is one that builds on the program's success by improving access to preventive oral health care, reducing administrative barriers, and supporting evidence-informed workforce planning.

"The CDCP has established a historic opportunity to improve oral health in Canada," said Ondina Love, CEO of CDHA. "As we look to the future, we must ensure the program does more than just pay for treatment. It should help Canadians prevent disease, maintain oral health, and improve their quality of life. That is where dental hygienists can make the greatest contribution."

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. For more information on the work of CDHA, visit cdha.ca.

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