



**THE CANADIAN DENTAL
HYGIENISTS ASSOCIATION**

**L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE
DES HYGIÉNISTES DENTAIRES**

**Submission to the Department of Finance
Pre-Budget Consultations 2025**

Canadian Dental Hygienists Association (CDHA)

August 26, 2025

CDHA is the collective national voice of nearly 34,000 dental hygienists working in Canada, directly representing over 23,000 individual members, including students.

Summary of Recommendations for Budget 2025

1. That the federal Government prioritize the long-term sustainability and coordination of federal oral health investments, including the Canadian Dental Care Plan, the Oral Health Access Fund, and Oral Health Data Initiatives, with an emphasis on ensuring that any potential spending adjustments are preceded by comprehensive consultation with stakeholders to safeguard program integrity and access to care goals.
2. That the federal Government embed oral health in planning, building, and supporting the health workforce to meet current and future needs.
3. That the federal Government invest in community-based oral health infrastructure with a focus on seniors and long-term care.

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RECOMMENDATION 1: That the federal Government prioritize the long-term sustainability and coordination of federal oral health investments, including the Canadian Dental Care Plan, Oral Health Access Fund, and Oral Health Data Initiatives, with an emphasis on ensuring that any potential spending adjustments are preceded by comprehensive consultation with stakeholders to safeguard program integrity and access goals.

Canada's strength is directly tied to the health of its people – and that includes **oral health**, a vital and often undervalued part of overall health, productivity, and well-being.

The [Canadian Dental Care Plan \(CDCP\)](#) is one of the country's largest and most transformative social programs. It is expected to make dental care more affordable for up to 9 million Canadian residents. Published [statistics for the CDCP](#) as of July 31, 2025 (cited August 26, 2025), reveal that more than 3.1 million Canadians were approved to participate in the plan for benefit year 2024 to 2025, while 2 million have already received care for the same benefit period.

The CDCP offers a wide range of preventive dental services—including examinations, scaling, fluoride treatments, and dental sealants—designed to maintain oral health and avoid more serious and costly conditions or problems in the mouth. Dental hygienists, who are among the over 25,000 oral health providers participating in the CDCP nationwide, play a key role in delivering these services with a strong focus on prevention.

Sustaining investments in the CDCP is essential to protecting what matters to Canadians—making it easier for people to get the preventive oral health care they need, especially those who struggle to afford it or face other barriers. To prioritize the long-term sustainability and coordination of federal oral health investments, CDHA recommends that the Government and Health Canada focus on the following priorities and approaches:

1. Permanent, multi-year funding with clear targets for access, coverage, and evaluation.
2. Continued coverage of preventive oral health care services.
3. Equity in access to oral health for uninsured Canadians.
4. Mechanisms for program evaluation, public reporting, and continuous improvement.
5. A national oral health data system embedded in any combination of Health Canada, Statistics Canada, and the Canadian Institute for Health Information to track utilization, outcomes, and gaps.
6. Targeted research and evaluation funding within the CIHR Institute of Musculoskeletal Health and Arthritis (IMHA) for oral health systems in research, public health models, workforce evaluation, and CDCP impact.

7. Engagement with stakeholders in the oral health community, including professional associations (national, provincial, territorial), researchers, providers, education institutions, advocacy groups, and patients/patient organizations.
8. Consideration of the CDCP in the government's response to the evolving Canada-United States relationship, including efforts to support Canadian independent dental hygiene and dental practices/businesses in navigating the effects of tariffs.
 - Cost and availability of dental instruments and equipment, in particular items that contain steel or stainless-steel components
 - Supply chain delays
 - Financial strain on smaller practices

In the process of addressing sustainability and coordination, the government's oral health investments and approaches must also be adaptive and responsive to evolve alongside population needs and provider realities on the ground, new system challenges, and emerging pressures.

RECOMMENDATION 2: That the federal Government embed oral health in planning, building, and supporting the health workforce to meet current and future needs.

A sustainable health care system depends on a strong, supported, and strategically integrated health workforce.

Among Canada's health workforce are **nearly 34,000 dental hygienists**—primary health care professionals who recommend and provide essential preventive and therapeutic clinical care, education, and health promotion to help improve the oral and overall health of Canadians. Their role is central to early intervention and the successful delivery of programs like the CDCP and other public programs (in addition to services delivered in private practices).

In line with the federal Government's renewed focus on supporting and improving access to oral health care services for Canadians, CDHA encourages Health Canada to expand this emphasis across its plans, efforts, and initiatives on planning, building, and supporting the health workforce—specifically by addressing opportunities and solutions for oral health professions, including dental hygienists.

A horizontal approach can include:

1. Working with provinces and territories to advance shared health care priorities, including expanding access to team-based primary care, including oral health care.
2. Collaborating with provinces, territories, Indigenous Peoples, key partners, and stakeholders to increase the number of oral health providers in communities that need them most.
3. Exploring opportunities to improve capacity within Canada's health educational and training systems to train the next generation of oral health care providers.
4. Supporting [Health Workforce Canada](#) and other workforce experts to address gaps and challenges in health workforce planning, including oral health care.
5. Strengthening the capacity of the long-term care workforce with qualified oral health professionals, including team-based care with dental hygienists.

From CDHA's perspective, a horizontal approach within the health portfolio and government-wide can strengthen the integration and impact of oral health outcomes/results in supporting and encouraging sustainable and adaptable health systems.

Other related areas to leverage and harmonize oral health issues within the government's priorities include primary care, seniors/aging, health promotion, health research, tobacco control, data and digital tools, pandemic preparedness and response, sports, climate change, and more.

RECOMMENDATION 3: That the new federal Government invest in community-based oral health infrastructure with a focus on seniors and long-term care.

As the new federal Government and members of Parliament target infrastructure goals and approvals to strengthen Canada's economic resilience, national independence, and rapid modernization, CDHA recommends that any health-related investments identify and address population oral health needs and innovations towards delivering better outcomes for Canadians.

By working with provinces, territories, key partners, and stakeholders, CDHA recommends that the federal Government invest in constructing and/or renovating **community-based oral health infrastructure** to connect more Canadians and under-served communities to oral health care services in more places such as:

- Dental/oral health facilities in long-term care homes
- Seniors community centres
- Rural/remote health hubs or community clinics
- Digital connectivity and remote monitoring technology to deliver oral health care services virtually/remotely

This would complement existing oral health priorities and aging strategies, including the ongoing operation of the Canadian Dental Care Plan, provincial/territorial and community dental/oral health programs, community training for oral health providers, and health promotion programs that focus on oral hygiene education and healthy habits.