



THE CANADIAN DENTAL
HYGIENISTS ASSOCIATION

L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE
DES HYGIÉNISTES DENTAIRES

Parliament Hill Day 2020



#CDHAontheHill



Laying the Groundwork

The evening before CDHA's annual advocacy day on Parliament Hill, CDHA board directors and senior staff attended a political affairs briefing by Rob LeForte, vice president of Impact Public Affairs. During the briefing, LeForte reviewed the current political climate in Ottawa, the government's mandate, highlights of CDHA's post-election activities, and best practices for engaging Parliamentarians in grassroots advocacy.

Armed with these strategic tools, CDHA was well prepared for Parliament Hill Day on February 20, with a record-breaking number of invitation-only meetings with members of Parliament, senators, and political advisors.

Priorities

CDHA's annual advocacy day is dedicated to raising awareness of the oral health issues affecting Canadians and to profiling the dental hygiene profession. On February 20, CDHA board directors and senior staff participated in approximately 30 meetings to discuss CDHA's key advocacy priorities:

- Universal dental care
- Preventive oral care for seniors
- Preventive oral care for Indigenous Peoples
- Vaping

Universal Dental Care

CDHA supports Prime Minister Trudeau's instructions to the Honourable Patty Hajdu, minister of health, to work with Parliament to study the possibility of national dental care. We look forward to sharing the expertise of Canada's dental hygienists with Parliament and to helping close the gaps in oral care nationally.

Key Messages:

- New research commissioned by CDHA has reinforced the need to implement universal dental care. The research finds that 4 in 10 Canadians do not have access to dental benefits; those without coverage are most likely to be elderly, have a lower income, live in a rural area, or live in Atlantic Canada or Quebec.
- This research also found that more than 1 in 5 Canadians have not accessed professional oral care in over two years.

CDHA urged the Standing Committee on Health to study universal dental care as a means of improving the oral health of all Canadians.



Vaping

CDHA delivered the message that dental hygienists, essential primary health care providers, see first-hand the effects of e-cigarette use on the oral cavity. The anticipated release of a new CDHA position statement on vaping to inform dental hygiene practice, programming, and policy was also noted. Though e-cigarettes are relatively new products, there is a growing body of evidence of various acute and chronic harms associated with their use, including possible effects on oral health.

Seniors' Oral Health

CDHA delivered the message that it is time for the federal government to play a leadership role in developing, together with the provinces, national long-term care and home care guidelines for seniors' oral care. These guidelines would include standard practices for daily mouth care as well as regular, professional preventive dental hygiene services and assessments. The importance of direct support for low-income seniors was also discussed. The goal is to create a system where provincial governments have an added incentive to develop their own preventive oral health care supports for low-income seniors.

Key Messages:

- By 2031, 1 in 4 Canadians will be over age 65, with many seniors retaining most, if not all, of their natural teeth.
- As the older adult segment of our society grows, so too will their health and oral health care needs.
- Numerous studies have identified significant oral health concerns, including high rates of gum disease, cavities, and poorly fitting dentures, among seniors.
- Long-term care residents have a high prevalence of untreated oral disease; these preventable oral diseases frequently result in more costly emergency procedures.

Indigenous Oral Health

CDHA called for greater investment in preventive oral care services in Indigenous communities. Oral health in First Nations and Inuit communities is far worse than in the general population, in part because dental hygiene services and programs are not readily available. As a result, easily treatable problems in the mouth often progress to more serious oral conditions requiring treatment in large urban centres. Many of these conditions, including oral diseases, can be prevented through access to local oral health care.

Key Messages:

- CDHA members are actively involved in oral health promotion and disease prevention in Nunavut, providing oral health care to children in 20 fly-in communities.
- Dental day surgery rates for children in Indigenous communities are close to nine times higher than those for children in non-Indigenous communities.

Building Relationships

Thanks to these productive meetings on February 20, CDHA is well positioned to influence the health care agenda in Ottawa.

These meetings helped our organization gather more information on upcoming studies, initiatives, and opportunities for advocacy on the part of dental hygienists, including a potential study by the Standing Committee on Health on universal dental care. It is our goal that the federal government take a leadership role and work with provincial governments and key stakeholders to make preventive oral health services a priority. We look forward to working with all parties to develop policies that will ensure access to oral care for all Canadians and help protect their oral and overall health.

Meetings

Larry Bagnell, MP for Yukon, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages

Rob Moore, MP for Fundy Royal

Churence Rogers, MP for Bonavista-Burin-Trinity

Hon. Senator Diane F. Griffin

Larry Maguire, MP for Brandon-Souris

Senator Thomas J. McInnis

Harun Jasarevic, Legislative Assistant to MP Peter Julian

Mike Kelloway, MP for Cape Breton-Canso, Member of the Standing Committee on Health

Senator Mary Jane McCallum

Richard Martel, MP for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord

Geoff Regan, MP for Halifax West

Hon. Senator Percy Downe

Francois Delisle, Committee Advisor to MP Pierre Paul-Hus

Leslie Kellestine, Executive Assistant to MP Marty Morantz

Ted Falk, MP for Provencher

Senator Lucie Moncion

Darren Fisher, MP for Dartmouth-Cole Harbour, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health

Senator Bev Busson

Tom Lukiwski, MP for Moose Jaw – Lake Centre – Lanigan

Musab Khalid, Conor Lewis and Robyn Otto - Legislative Assistants to MP Pam Damoff - Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services

Yvonne Jones, MP for Labrador, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Northern Affairs

Wayne Easter, MP for Malpeque, Chair of the Standing Committee on Finance

Landon Wilcock, Policy Advisor to Minister Dan Vandal, Minister of Northern Affairs

Don Davies, MP for Vancouver Kingsway and Member of Standing Committee on Health

Ziad Aboutaif, MP for Edmonton Manning

Han Dong, MP for Don Valley North

Salma Zahid, MP for Scarborough Centre

Francesco Sorbara, MP for Vaughan Woodbridge, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue

Karen Vecchio, MP for Elgin-Middlesex-London



Salma Zahid, M.P.



Larry Bagnell, M.P.

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Churence Rogers, M.P.



Richard Martel, M.P.



Mike Kelloway, M.P.



Patty Hajdu,
Minister of Health



Wayne Easter, M.P.



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Karen Vecchio, M.P.



Ted Falk, M.P.

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Churence Rogers, M.P.

Karen Vecchio,
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