



Happy Oral Health Month and Happy National Dental Hygienists Week!

The beginning of Oral Health Month intersects with the Federal government's announcement of the new Canadian Dental Care Plan (CDCP). The CDCP will provide \$13 billion over five years and \$4.4 billion ongoing to support dental coverage for an estimated 9 million uninsured Canadians.

In addition to this plan, the government will provide \$250 million over three years and \$75 million ongoing to establish an Oral Health Access Fund that will invest in targeted measures to address Oral Health gaps among vulnerable populations and work toward reducing barriers to accessing care, including in rural and remote communities. Finally, the Government has committed to invest \$23.1 million over 2 years to collect data on Oral Health and Dental Care across Canada. Data-informed policy is a good thing.

These investments by the Government of Canada are huge! Adding to my excitement around this program is that I get to work with Registered Dental Hygienists, all of whom are at the foundation of the success of this program. I am not alone in this excitement; the CDHO Council and staff team are very excited to work alongside the profession as we see the implementation of measures designed to increase access to Oral Health care. What a great thing to help us celebrate National Dental Hygienists Week this week!

Please note that we are ready to make **The Path: Your Journey Through Indigenous Canada** or **Le Parcours: Votre voyage au sein du Canada autochtone**, the 5-module online course on the history and contemporary realities of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis in Canada, available starting this week. You will receive a separate email tomorrow with details on how you can log in for access to this course. Just a reminder that your access to this course is paid by the CDHO, so there is no need for you to make any payment. The access code will be provided to you in the separate email we send tomorrow.

Other reminders about Continuing Professional Development activities:

- **Drugs in Dental Hygiene Practice Course and Examination**, which was previously available at a cost of \$250 is now available to any RDH, **free of charge**.
- The cost of upgrading to a **Specialty Certificate of Registration** is now waived.
- The cost for **Authorization to Self-initiate** is now waived.

The CDHO is very happy to be able to provide these opportunities to you, free of charge, as a means of supporting professional advancement and supporting public access to safe, competent care.

Finally, a note about IPAC concerns that were communicated to the Health Profession Regulators by the Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health. These concerns were regarding observed lapses in instrument reprocessing that were seen across a variety of clinical settings, including dental offices. The three most common issues that have been identified recently are:

1. Failure to use and check the appropriate chemical indicators used in the sterilization process to ensure that sterilization has occurred.
2. Failure to follow the Manufacturer's Instructions for Use (MIFU) (of solutions or equipment) during disinfection and reprocessing. A copy of all MIFUs must be on file in the office or clinic.
3. Lack of appropriate training for staff in reprocessing and sterilization. The office of the Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health noted that all staff who are responsible for reprocessing and sterilization must receive appropriate training prior to engaging in reprocessing and sterilization and then on an ongoing basis.

Please ensure that you comply with these items. Patient protection is everyone's responsibility. If you are unsure of any of these items, please consult the [CDHO IPAC Guidelines](#) or feel free to contact one of our friendly, helpful Practice Advisors – we are here to help!

Thanks for your attention to these items. Let's make sure that we take time to celebrate the great contributions Registered Dental Hygienists make to the health of the people of Ontario!! Happy Oral Health Month and Happy National Dental Hygienists Week!

Best wishes!

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