

College of DENTAL HYGIENISTS of Ontario

2025 Fair Registration Practices Report

Prepared for the Office of the Fairness Commissioner (OFC)



FAIRNESS COMMISSIONER
COMMISSAIRE À L'ÉQUITÉ

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1. Background

Under section 22.7(1) of Schedule 2 of the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991 (RHPA), which is substantially similar to section 20 of the Fair Access to Regulated Professions and Compulsory Trades Act, 2006 (FARPACTA).

“A regulated profession shall prepare a fair registration practices report annually or at such other times as the Fairness Commissioner may specify or at such times as may be specified in the regulations”.

Section 22.9 of Schedule 2 of the RHPA and Section 23 of FARPACTA then go on to indicate that the Fairness Commissioner shall specify the form in which these reports shall be prepared, along with the required filing dates. This section also stipulates that a regulator must make these reports public.

It is pursuant to these authorities that the Office of the Fairness Commissioner (OFC) has required that each regulator complete its annual Fair Registration Practices Report (FRP).

Please note that this report covers the time-period from January 1 to December 31, 2025.

The FRP:

- Collects information about the organization, applicants to the profession and current membership.
- Provides information to the public about how the organization has implemented fair registration practices during the reporting period.
- Helps the OFC to successfully undertake the education and compliance activities which include monitoring, applying a risk-informed compliance framework, assessing performance, and sharing best practices.
- Determines whether the regulator is complying with recently enacted legislative and regulatory provisions designed to reduce barriers for domestic labour mobility and internationally trained applicants.
- Identifies trends across regulated professions and regulated health colleges.

2. Organization information

Organization name	College of DENTAL HYGIENISTS of Ontario
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For questions about this report, please contact:

Name	Eric Bruce
Job Title	Deputy Registrar/ Director, Registration & Professional Conduct PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT
E-mail	ebruce@cdho.org
Name	Keisha Simpson
Job Title	Manager Registration, Strategy Lead Equity & Inclusion
E-mail	ksimpson@cdho.org

3. Registration requirements

Applicants to the regulated professions and compulsory trades must fulfil registration requirements to practice their profession or use a professional title. This section summarizes registration requirements for each profession or trade regulated by College of DENTAL HYGIENISTS of Ontario

Licensing requirements (brief description for each requirement listed):

Profession/ Trade Name	Dental Hygienist
Academic requirement	An applicant must successfully complete a program in dental hygiene that is equivalent to a full-time program of two years. The program must be accredited by either the Commission on Dental Accreditation of Canada (CDAC) or the American Dental Association

	Commission on Dental Accreditation(ADA/CODA). Alternatively, if the program is not accredited, the Registration Committee must consider it to be substantially equivalent to an accredited program
Experience requirement	CDHO does not require any specific work experience for registration; clinical training is built into dental hygiene educational programs.
Language requirement	An applicant must be able to effectively comprehend and communicate in either English or French, both orally and in writing. CDHO does not require any specific proof of language proficiency, such as a language proficiency evaluation; however, applicants must be able to successfully complete the National Dental Hygiene Certification Examination (NDHCE) and, if necessary, a clinical competency evaluation, which is offered in English or French.
Additional information on licensing requirements (may include links to appropriate page on regulator website):	Additional information about the registration process can be found on CDHO's website under the \"Become a Dental Hygienist\" tab (www.cdho.org). In summary, applicants must also fulfill the following requirements: - Successfully complete the National Dental Hygiene Certification Examination (NDHCE) administered by the Federation of Dental Hygiene Regulators of Canada (Federation) - Successfully complete the Canadian Performance Examination in Dental Hygiene (CPEDH) administered by the

	Federation, if they did not graduate from an accredited educational program - Successfully complete the CDHO's jurisprudence examination - Successfully complete an approved refresher course or competency assessment if they did not graduate or practice dental hygiene within the previous three years - Provide a police record check, evidence of authorization to work in Canada, and evidence of holding professional liability insurance.

4. Third party assessments

Third party organizations that assess qualifications on behalf of the regulator.

Organization name	Function
Federation of Dental Hygiene Regulators of Canada (FDHRC)	Knowledge based exam

Fair access legislation requires regulators to take reasonable measures to ensure that any third parties undertake assessment of qualifications in a way that is transparent, objective, impartial and fair.

College of DENTAL HYGIENISTS of Ontario takes the following measure(s) to ensure fair and timely assessments:

The FDHRC is governed by a board of directors consisting of dental hygiene regulators from across Canada, including the CDHO Registrar. The FDHRC's Equivalency Evaluation Committee is responsible for evaluating the education and qualifications of applicants, while the Examination Committee is responsible for overseeing all activities connected with the development, administration, and

validation of the NDHCE. To ensure accountability, CDHO representatives are directly represented on the board of FDHRC and its operational committees.

5. Accomplishments, risks and mitigations

Key accomplishments and risks pertaining to fair registration practices during the reporting period are summarized below.

A. Accomplishments

1	In March 2025, CDHO successfully upgraded its data management system, as well as the registrant and applicant portal. These upgrades eliminated the need for hard copies or email submissions of supporting documents and streamlined the application process.
2	CDHO is committed to improving its application and registration processes. All recent applicants are sent a voluntary survey so they can provide feedback on the application process and identify any areas for improvement. Applicants' reported 93% overall satisfaction with the registration process in 2025. These results are published in the Registration Experience Dashboard.
3	CDHO aims to process and approve completed applications within 10 business days of receipt. In 2025, 99% of completed applications were approved within that timeframe.

B. Risks and Mitigations

Risk	Mitigation Measure
CDHO did not have any risk in the reporting year that impacted on its ability to achieve registration outcomes for applicants	Not applicable.

6. Changes to registration practices

During the January 1 to December 31, 2025 reporting period, College of DENTAL HYGIENISTS of Ontario has introduced the following changes impacting its registration processes. Changes, anticipated impacts, and risk mitigation are summarized below.

A. Registration requirements and practices

Registration process	Changes Made (Yes / No)	Description
Timelines for registration, decisions and/or responses	No	
Changes to internal review or appeal process	No	
Assessment of qualifications, including competency-based assessments and examinations	Yes	<p>In 2024, the CDHO undertook a comprehensive item writing process to develop new questions for the Jurisprudence Examination (JEM) , an open-book, multiple-choice test that all applicants to the College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario (CDHO) must complete. Its purpose is to assess applicants' understanding of the laws governing Registered Dental Hygienists in Ontario, ensuring that the exam remains current and defensible. The new exam questions were incorporated into the JEM in early 2025, following a psychometric analysis by the exam provider, AssessBank, and translation into French. This examination development process will take place annually to ensure that the JEM continues to serve its primary purpose: protecting the public by certifying that candidates possess the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes, and judgment to perform essential occupational activities safely and effectively.</p>

<p>Registration requirements either through regulation, by-law or policy</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>In 2025, the Ontario Government introduced legislation to permit several regulated health professionals from other Canadian jurisdictions, including Dental Hygienists, to practise in Ontario for up to six months while their application for registration is being processed by their regulatory college. Applicants applying under “As of Right” rules must be registered in good standing in another Canadian jurisdiction, have no history of professional conduct concerns, hold appropriate liability insurance, and sign a declaration, among other requirements. These changes will come into affect in 2026. On September 3, 2025, the Ministry of Health approved the amendments proposed by the CDHO to the General Regulation under the Dental Hygiene Act, 1991. One significant amendment was the revocation of the Examinations Regulation, which previously allowed candidates a fourth attempt at the national entry-to-practice examinations. This change aligns Ontario with other Canadian regulators, who permit only three attempts. In 2015, the National Dental Hygiene Certification Board, the organization that previously administered the NDHCE/CPEDH, updated its policies to allow a maximum of three attempts for candidates. After this change, Ontario was the only province that allowed a fourth attempt. Additional changes included the following: * Renaming the “Inactive” class of registration to “Non-Practising.” * Replacing references to specific examining and accrediting bodies, including the National Dental Hygiene Examination Board (NDHB) and the Commission on Dental Accreditation of Canada (CDAC), with generic references. This</p>
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		change permits CDHO to adapt in the case of changes to the name of examining or accrediting bodies in future. * Updating reporting requirements, such as the disclosures applicants must make regarding their conduct history, to reflect requirements found in the Health Professions Procedural Code. * Making minor housekeeping amendments of an administrative nature that do not directly affect applicants or registrants. CDHO staff have begun implementing these amendments and have notified registrants and applicants about the changes. As of now, applicants are no longer permitted a fourth attempt at the national entry-to-practice examinations. Updates have been made to the CDHO website and supporting documents. Changes to the public register and internal database to reflect the newly named "Non-Practising" class of registration are currently in progress and will be completed in 2026.
Documentation requirements for registration	Yes	In March 2025, CDHO successfully upgraded its data management system, as well as the registrant and applicant portal. These upgrades eliminated the need for hard copies or email submissions of supporting documents and streamlined the application process.

B. Training, policy and applicant supports

Registration process	Changes Made (Yes / No)	Description
Anti-racism and inclusion-based policies and practices	Yes	In March 2025, CDHO's Council approved a Strategic Plan for 2025-2027. One of the strategic goals of the plan is to advance CDHO's commitments to equity and inclusion. CDHO continues to advance efforts that

	<p>support DEI through several initiatives detailed in this strategic action plan. CDHO continued to engage in the following anti-racism and inclusion-based initiatives in 2025. CDHO collects a series of demographic questions on its application and annual registration renewal forms. These voluntary questions ask dental hygienists and applicants how they identify along four diversity dimensions: Indigenous identity; visible minority identity; sexual orientation and gender identity; and disability. The data collected will help CDHO better understand demographic trends in the dental hygiene profession and inform efforts to advance equity, diversity, and inclusion. Summarized de-identified information will be used for statistical purposes (reports, analyses, studies) and to provide figures regarding group representation in the profession. The questionnaire does not include every important diversity dimension, but the four dimensions that have been included cover aspects of identity that are generally recognized as being impacted by bias and discrimination. We had a 89% response rate across all four dimensions in 2025. CDHO participated in a webinar organized by the OFC on July 23, 2025. During the webinar, we highlighted our efforts to address anti-racism concerns, as well as the development and implementation of strategies for collecting, analyzing, and using demographic data to promote equitable registration practices. CDHO continues to provide free access to the NVision course The Path: Your Journey Through Indigenous Canada for all Registered Dental Hygienists and College staff. At the December 2025 Council meeting, Council decided to make</p>
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	<p>The Path mandatory for all dental hygiene registrants in Ontario by December 31, 2027. In 2022, CDHO engaged a third-party research company to conduct a Voice of the Patient survey. The survey is now administered yearly in four languages – English, French, Mandarin and Punjabi – with 2,000 patients participating. The survey asks about participants' experiences with dental hygiene practice and barriers to accessing care. CDHO uses this data to improve resources for RDHs and to develop more patient-focused information. Responses from the 2023 survey highlighted some patients' experiences with racism and discrimination during their dental appointments. The results of the survey since 2022 are now finalized and published on the Voice of the Patient Dashboard on the CDHO website. https://cdho.org/voice-of-the-patient-dashboard-available/ . Since 2023, CDHO has partnered with Indspire, an Indigenous national charity that invests in the education of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people for the long-term benefit of these individuals, their families and communities, to create The CDHO Bursary for Indigenous Students in Dental Hygiene Programs. Through this partnership, CDHO supports efforts to increase access to dental hygiene education programs for Indigenous students. In 2025, the CDHO Council approved a budget for this partnership with Indspire, extending it for another three years beginning in 2026. Over the last few years, CDHO has been exploring ways to help Registered Dental Hygienists (RDHs) further improve their knowledge and build confidence in practice, including through the development of e-learning modules. In 2025, CDHO released</p>
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	<p>a trauma- and violence-informed care (TVIC) e-learning module. The module explores the effects of trauma, offers guidance on providing TVIC, and highlights why TVIC is essential for building trust and creating a safe environment for clients and staff. At the end of the module, RDHs are provided with a set of reflection questions. While RDHs are not required to complete this module, completion can count towards their Quality Assurance hours. CDHO partnered with the Canadian Society for Disability and Oral Health to develop an e-learning module on treating clients with disabilities. The module will provide an overview of common disabilities and their associated oral health manifestations; barriers to accessing care for clients with disabilities; and considerations for treating clients with disabilities. The module is interactive and includes a mechanism to reinforce learning. The module was finalized in 2025 and completion can also count towards an RDH's Quality Assurance hours. CDHO Council receives training on anti-bias as part of the annual orientation. CDHO staff continues to engage in training and collaborative efforts focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion. CDHO is committed to creating more inclusive and welcoming environments while promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion within dental practice. This commitment includes addressing issues identified in the 2023 Patient Experiences with Racism and Discrimination Study, the Registrant Engagement Study, and the Voice of the Patient Study. These efforts aim to strengthen standards and guidelines on professional communication and intercultural competence. Moreover, the CDHO is dedicated</p>
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	<p>to supporting registrants in recognizing and understanding Indigenous-specific racism. In response to these concerns, the CDHO is developing a Standard of Practice focused on cultural safety, humility, and anti-racism. This important work is currently in progress and is expected to be completed by 2027. CDHO regularly participates in the Health Profession Regulators of Ontario (HPRO) meetings/education sessions on DEI to enhance collaboration in this area. The Anti-Racism in Health Regulation Project Steering Committee delivered its final products, which include an equity impact assessment. HPRO is holding meetings to help colleges implement these tools, which CDHO is observing. CDHO continues to study these resources to better understand how to implement them and will collaborate with the other colleges on the rollout of these tools. On June 17, 2025, CDHO hosted the first HPRO EDI Network Conference at its office space, HUB 601. In 2025, CDHO appointed a Director for Policy and Strategic Initiatives and a Strategy Lead for Equity and Inclusion to lead efforts aimed at promoting equity, diversity, inclusion, and reconciliation within our profession and systems. A key focus of these roles is to review both new and existing policies, guidelines, standards, and the Code of Ethics to ensure that principles and values related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are properly reflected.</p>
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C. System partners

Registration process	Changes Made (Yes / No)	Description
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Steps to increase accountability of third parties	No	
Mutual recognition agreements	No	
Accreditation of educational programs	No	

D. Responsiveness to changes in the regulatory environment

Registration process	Changes Made (Yes / No)	Description
Steps to address labour issues (minister/stakeholders consultations, check demand-supply gap, etc)	Yes	CDHO conducted a geospatial analysis in 2023 to examine the distribution of the dental hygienist workforce in relation to the population distribution in Ontario, Canada. The analysis utilized anonymized data from CDHO and the Canadian census, focusing on geographic accessibility. The datasets were linked using the forward sortation area (FSA) component of Canadian postal codes, and the distribution across 520 FSAs in Ontario was examined. The analysis was conducted at three different levels based on varying aggregations of the FSA data. CDHO completed its analysis in 2024, and the report was published in the BMC Oral Health, an open-access, peer-reviewed journal, in May 2025.
Other	No	

7. Membership and application data

The Office of the Fairness Commissioner collects membership and application data from regulators through annual Fair Registration Practices Reports, which are also made available to the public. Information is collected for the purpose of discerning statistical changes and trends related to a regulator’s membership, application volumes, licensure/certification results, and appeals year over year.

A. Race-based data collected

	Race-based data collected? (Yes or No)
Members	YES
Applicants	YES

Additional description:

Please see previous comments regarding the use of demographic data, above. In summary, CDHO uses this data to analyse the demographic makeup of the profession to support its understanding of and commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion in the profession.

B. Other identity-based or demographic data collected

	Other identity-based or demographic data collected? (Yes or No)
Members	Yes
Applicants	Yes

Additional description:

CDHO asks a series of demographic questions on its application and annual registration renewal forms. These voluntary questions ask dental hygienists and applicants how they identify along four diversity dimensions: Indigenous identity; visible minority identity; sexual orientation and gender identity; and disability.

C. Languages of service provision

College of DENTAL HYGIENISTS of Ontario makes application materials and information available to applicants in the following languages.

Language	Yes / No
English	Yes
French	Yes
Other (please specify)	

D. Membership Profile

Profession Name	Total Number of Members
Dental Hygienist	16658

Class of License	Total Number of Members	Number of Internationally Educated Members
Full / General/ Independent Practice	15281	417
Non-Practising	726	35
Specialty	651	36

Gender	Number of Members
Male	609
X (includes trans, non-binary, and two-spirit people)	3
Female	16046

Jurisdiction of Initial Training	Number of Members
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Ontario	15892
Other provinces and territories	277
United States	392
Other International	97
Other/not collected	0

Country of Initial Training	Number of Members
Armenia	1
Australia	1
Canada	16169
China	1
Colombia	11
Denmark	2
United Kingdom	50
Hong Kong	2
Iran	2
Ireland	2
Israel	8
Jamaica	4
Japan	2
Netherlands	1
South Africa	4
South Korea	6
United States of America	392

Official language of preference	Number of Members
English	16493
French	165

Racial identity (optional)	Number of Members
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Middle Eastern	245
Black	300
East / Southeast Asian	843
Latin American	158
South Asian	696
Other	155
Not collected	2436
Indigenous	299
White	11526

E. Data Notes

147 registrants identified as a visible minority but did not disclose their specific racial identity. These registrants were categorized under "Not collected."

F. Applicant Profile

Profession Name	Total Number of Applicants
Dental Hygienist	1189

Gender	Number of Applicants
Female	1091
X (includes trans, non-binary, and two-spirit people)	1
Male	97

Jurisdiction of Initial Training	Number of Applicants
Other provinces and territories	18
United States	4

Other International Ontario	6 1161
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Country of Initial Training	Number of Applicants
Australia	1
Canada	1179
Hong Kong	2
Ireland	1
Jamaica	1
United Kingdom	1
United States of America	4

Official language of preference	Number of Applicants
English	1181
French	8

Racial identity (optional)	Number of Applicants
Middle Eastern	40
Black	33
East / Southeast Asian	89
South Asian	82
Other	16
Indigenous	14
Not collected	209
White	697
Latin American	9

G. Data Notes

59 registrants identified as a visible minority but did not disclose their specific racial identity. These registrants were categorized under "Not collected."

H. Application Decisions

The table below summarizes the outcome of registration decisions finalized in 2025. Some applications may have been received in the previous year.

Jurisdiction of initial training	Successful	Unsuccessful	Withdrawn
Other provinces and territories	20	0	0
United States	4	0	0
Other International	6	0	0
Ontario	1213	1	0

Applications with decisions pending

The table below summarizes the inventory of applications in progress as of December 31, 2025. Again, some of these applications may have been received in the previous year.

Jurisdiction of initial training	Incomplete	Complete	Total
Other provinces and territories	1	0	1
United States	0	1	1
Other International	1	1	2
Ontario	16	40	56

I. New Registrants

For the 2025 reporting year, the breakdown of new registrants by class of registration is provided below:

Class of registration	Total new registrants	Number of internationally educated registrants
Full / General/ Independent Practice	1209	5

J. Data Notes

The total numbers may include applicants who submitted their application in the previous reporting year, met all requirements except for payment of the registration fee, and became registered in 2025. Additionally, the totals may also include applicants who submitted their application in the reporting year and met all requirements except for payment of the registration fee.

K. Reviews and Appeals

Applicants for registration may appeal a registration decision. An **internal review or appeal** involves formal reconsideration of a registration decision further to an application and submissions by the applicant.

Jurisdiction of initial training	Number of internal reviews and appeals processed	Number of decisions changed following internal review or appeal
Ontario	1	0

An **external review or appeal** involves review of a registration decision by an external appeal tribunal or court, such as the Health Professions Review and Appeal Board or Divisional Court.

Jurisdiction of initial training	Number of applicants who sought external review or appeal	Number of decisions changed following external review or appeal
Ontario	1	0

Issues raised in reviews and appeals can point to challenges in the registration process. The table below summarizes top issues or reasons that applicants raised during these appeal proceedings.

Issue or reason raised	Number of appeals
1. Application of good conduct provisions.	1

Internationally trained applicants face additional challenges in the registration process. The table below summarizes top reasons for not registering internationally trained individuals.

Reason for not registering	Number of internationally trained applicants

L. Data Notes



Glossary of terms

Applicant: An individual who has applied for membership in a regulated profession or compulsory trade, with the associated rights to practice their profession / trade or use a professional title.

Domestic labour mobility: Applications subject to the Canadian Free Trade Agreement, which stipulates that a certificate issued by one province or territory should be recognized by all others unless there is an exception due to public health, safety and security reasons.

Internationally educated / trained: An individual whose initial professional education was not from a Canadian educational institution, or who is applying for trade certification based on experience gained outside Canada. This category includes individuals with education / training in the US and other countries. It also includes individuals who completed their initial professional education outside Canada and later addressed gaps with courses or a bridging program based in Canada.

Jurisdiction of initial training: For professions, the jurisdiction in which an applicant obtained their initial professional education used in full or partial fulfilment of registration requirements. For trades, the jurisdiction of initial trade experience listed on a Trades Equivalency Assessment (TEA) application.

Member: An individual who has satisfied the conditions for registration in their profession / trade and has been granted the right to practice and/or the right to use a professional designation or title. Members may hold a full license to engage in independent practice, or they may hold an alternate class of registration.

Racial identity: Voluntary self-report data of racial identity as a social description. Follows categories identified in the Ontario Anti-Racism Directorate Data <<https://www.ontario.ca/document/data-standards-identification-and-monitoring-systemic-racism>> .

Registration requirements: the entry-to-practice requirements that that an applicant must meet to be granted full membership in a regulated profession or trade, with the associated right to practice or right to use a professional title.

- **Academic requirement:** The formal education, or equivalent, that is required for licensing or certification in a particular regulated profession or trade.
- **Experience requirement:** The experiential training or work experience that is required for licensing or certification in a particular regulated profession or trade.
- **Language requirement:** The level of language proficiency that is required for licensing or certification in a particular regulated profession or trade, and the language proficiency tests accepted in fulfillment of this requirement.

Third party service provider: An external organization that assesses applicant qualifications on behalf of the regulator.