



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

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INFORMATION PACKAGE FOR DENTAL HYGIENISTS NATIONAL SYSTEM OF DIRECT BILLING-2010

Canadian dental hygienists are registered primary oral health care professionals who possess a unique body of knowledge, distinct expertise, recognized standards of education and practice, and a Code of Ethics. As integral members of the oral health care system, dental hygienists provide preventative, educational, clinical and therapeutic services. The dental hygiene process of care includes assessment, treatment, planning, implementation and evaluation. “Dental hygienists are the only health professionals whose primary concern is the prevention of oral disease” (Health and Welfare, Canada, 1988).

Please note that the direct billing system is applicable only to dental hygienists who bill directly to the client under their own name for the service they provide – it is not applicable for dental hygienists whose treatment is billed through a dentist.

With changes in regulations in the provinces of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, dental hygienists provide the public with increased access to preventive service through dental hygiene practices. Dental hygienists may practice in a fixed location, providing mobile services to the homebound or institutionalized or under direct contract with a long term care facility. With these developments has come the need for dental hygienists to be reimbursed directly by clients covered by dental insurance.

CDHA was asked by the provincial dental hygienists' associations to develop a national process similar to the one in place for dentistry. Through meeting with insurance industry executives, a billing system for dental hygiene was created. The end results of this effort are: a unique national Dental Hygiene claim form, a CDHA coding system and list of services, and unique provider identification number (UIN).

In 2009, in response to calls for national e-health standards and license portability across the country, the CDHA implemented a new format for unique provider numbers (UIN's) which replaces the old system which identified members by province.

The coding system and list of services was last revised in December, 2009. Each province in turn develops its own provincial fee guide through the identification of the economic and practice realities. The one exception is the province of Alberta where there is no provincial fee guide.

DENTAL HYGIENE CARE

Dental Hygiene care is a continuum of preventative, educational, clinical and therapeutic oral health services provided by a dental hygienist in an ethical and accountable manner. The content, organization and management of dental hygiene care are clearly defined and are guided by the principles of accessibility of all Canadians to comprehensive oral health care, the protection of the public through the provision of quality care and the promotion of oral health as an integral component of general health.

Insurance providers have played an increasingly important role in the expanding opportunities for more Canadians to receive oral care and in promoting the prevention of oral disease. In a rapidly changing climate for the delivery of dental care, there has been an increased need to work collaboratively towards common goals and to create new partnerships to maintain quality, affordable dental care.

DENTAL HYGIENE SERVICES AND PROCESS OF CARE

The services provided by dental hygienists are units of care defined as essential competencies by the National Dental Hygiene Certification Board and the Commission on Dental Accreditation of Canada, the body that accredits dental hygiene education programs. The competencies are the foundation of dental hygiene education and assure entry-level competence for dental hygiene practice. The present development of national education standards by a joint initiative of the Canadian Dental Hygienists Association and the Dental Hygiene Educators of Canada will further standardize educational requirements for dental hygienists in Canada.

Dental hygiene services are organized and provided in a process of continuous assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation. The model of dental hygiene care is well established as a process for providing care in partnership with clients. This partnership promotes a greater responsibility by the client and a greater involvement in the outcome of their care and oral health. Together with the Canadian Practice Standards for Dental Hygienists, the process of care promotes dental hygiene care that is continuous and adaptive to the dynamic environment in which it is provided.