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

For immediate release (disponible en français sur la demande)

Media Release

Canadian Dental Hygienists Have Set to Surpass \$400,000 of Donated No-Cost Dental Hygiene Services

January 28, 2015 (Ottawa, ON) – In celebration of Heart Month and Valentine’s Day, registered dental hygienists across Canada are opening their doors and their hearts on Saturday, February 7, to provide no-cost preventive dental hygiene services, including oral cancer screenings, as part of a national campaign.

For the seventh consecutive year, the “Gift from the Heart” event gives dental hygienists the opportunity to reach out to their communities and help members of the public who may be financially unable to afford oral care or have difficulty accessing dental hygiene services. The Canadian Dental Hygienists Association (CDHA) is a strong supporter of this event, sponsoring an orientation webinar and facilitating, alongside the Oral Cancer Foundation, the distribution of promotional resource kits to all participants. “CDHA is committed to improving access to oral health care for all,” explains Mandy Hayre, CDHA President, “and we are delighted that so many of our members are participating in this important public outreach initiative.”

Because dental hygienists can work independently outside the traditional dental office, the “Gift from the Heart” event also helps to build awareness about the public's right to choose their health care provider. Saskatchewan and British Columbia dental hygienists paved the way for independent practice almost 20 years ago. With changes to legislation in Alberta in 2006 and Ontario in 2007, the number of

independent dental hygiene practices in Canada has grown tremendously. Manitoba (2008), Nova Scotia (2009), New Brunswick (2013), and Newfoundland and Labrador (2013) dental hygienists have benefited from more recent legislative revisions, joining the ranks of almost 900 independent dental hygiene practitioners nationally.

“The profession of dental hygiene is forever evolving, and this year’s ‘Gift from the Heart’ event will see registered dental hygienists from seven provinces and more than 100 clinics working to educate everyone on the importance of preventing oral disease for a healthy mouth and healthy body,” says Bev Woods, CDHA member, event founder, and participant.

In the past six years it is estimated that dental hygienists across Canada have provided approximately \$376,500 worth of no-cost dental hygiene services during the “Gift from the Heart” events. Last year alone, dental hygienists across Canada saw approximately 1,000 clients during the one-day event. There is still time for professionals to volunteer their services and for the public to register for treatment. Visit www.giftfromtheheart.ca for more details or to find a location near you.

Serving the profession since 1963, CDHA is the collective national voice of more than 26,800 registered dental hygienists working in Canada, directly representing 17,000 individual members including dental hygienists and students. Dental hygiene is the sixth largest registered health profession in Canada with professionals working in a variety of settings, including independent practice, with people of all ages, addressing issues related to oral health. For more information on oral health, visit www.dentalhygienecanada.ca.

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