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Media Release

Canadian Dental Hygienists Association Supports Federal Investment in Nunavut Health Services

March 19, 2015 (Ottawa, ON) – The Canadian Dental Hygienists Association (CDHA) applauds the federal government for its \$32 million investment in services to address mental health issues, chronic disease, and children’s oral health in Nunavut. This funding aims to improve access to care and reduce reliance on out-of-territory medical travel.

CDHA and its members have been actively involved in oral health promotion and disease prevention in Nunavut in recent years. As part of the Nunavut Oral Health Pilot Project, dental hygienists have travelled to the territory to provide oral health care to children between the ages of 0 and 7 living in 19 Nunavut communities. This care includes the placement of temporary restorations (interim stabilization therapy), which prevent pain and preserve tooth structure until the child can be seen for follow-up treatment. In collaboration with Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), CDHA has also developed culturally appropriate resources, including handouts and activity sheets on dental hygiene in English and Inuktitut for distribution across the territory. These oral health promotion materials are available for download on ITK’s website at <https://www.itk.ca/media/media-release/update-itk%E2%80%99s-healthy-teeth-healthy-lives-inuit-oral-health-action-plan>.

“CDHA is committed to improving the oral health of Inuit peoples, who have a rate of oral disease that is two to three times higher than other Canadians,” states CDHA past president, Mary Bertone. She adds, “We commend the federal government for recognizing the need to provide additional funding to the Nunavut Oral Health Pilot Project, which will allow more dental hygienists to travel to all communities across the territory, delivering on-site oral health services and treatments to those in need of care.”

Serving the profession since 1963, CDHA is the collective national voice of more than 26,800 registered dental hygienists working in Canada, directly representing more than 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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