



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

For immediate release (Disponible en français sur la demande)

Media Release

Dental Hygienists Call for Plain Packaging of Tobacco Products in Canada

May 26, 2016 (Ottawa, ON) — World No Tobacco Day takes place on May 31, and this year, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Secretariat of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control are calling on all countries to adopt plain (standardized) packaging of tobacco products. As experts in oral health promotion and disease prevention, Canadian dental hygienists support this effort to reduce tobacco consumption, recognizing the positive impact that it will have on both oral and overall health.

Smoking is the leading preventable cause of death in Canada, and it is estimated that one billion people will die from tobacco-related diseases in the 21st century. “Plain packaging is a proven tobacco control measure,” explains Donna Scott, president of the Canadian Dental Hygienists Association (CDHA). “This approach reduces the attractiveness of these products, restricts advertising and promotion and their associated misleading claims, and increases the effectiveness of health warnings.”

Since the harmful chemicals in tobacco products pass through the oral cavity, the effects of long-term tobacco use are readily apparent on the teeth, gums, tongue, and cheeks as well as on the lips, face, and neck. Further, all forms of tobacco use increase the risk of oral cancer. “Dental hygienists play a critical role in routinely screening for oral cancer, and aid in the prevention and elimination of tobacco use,” explains Scott. Along with a good oral care plan that includes regular dental hygiene visits, oral cancer screenings, and smoking cessation strategies, the federal government’s endorsement of plain paper packaging and promotion of a tobacco-free lifestyle will help to improve the oral and overall health of all Canadians.

Serving the profession since 1963, CDHA is the collective national voice of more than 28,495 registered dental hygienists working in Canada, directly representing 18,000 individual members including dental hygienists and students. Dental hygiene is the 6th largest registered health profession in Canada with professionals working in a variety of settings, including independent dental hygiene 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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Angie D’Aoust, Director of Marketing and Communications
1-800-267-5235 ext. 134, or by email adaoust@cdha.ca

www.cdha.ca

