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Media Release

Dental Hygienists Take Action to Reduce the Burden of Oral Cancer

February 1, 2016 (Ottawa, ON) — On World Cancer Day (February 4), Canada’s dental hygienists will renew their commitment to the global fight against cancer, which claims 8.2 million lives worldwide every year. World Cancer Day’s new three-year “We can. I can.” campaign theme emphasizes the role that we all have to play in raising awareness and reducing the impact of cancer on individuals, families, and communities.

“Dental hygienists are committed to educating and informing all Canadians about the links between lifestyle choices and oral cancer, as well as about the importance of regular oral cancer screenings,” explains Donna Scott, president of the Canadian Dental Hygienists Association (CDHA). “Regular dental hygiene visits include an examination of the head, neck, and mouth. When irregularities are detected, an appropriate referral for follow-up is made.” Dental hygienists also help to reduce the risk factors for oral cancer by educating clients on the hazards of tobacco and alcohol use and of sun exposure, especially to the lips, as well as the importance of HPV vaccinations.

Recognizing that early detection has great potential to reduce the oral cancer burden in Canada, CDHA has recently released an oral cancer screening course for dental hygienists along with several oral cancer resources for the public, including a [fact sheet and step-by-step instructions for oral self-examination](#). “Dental hygienists are your partners in prevention,” adds Scott. “They encourage all Canadians to maintain good oral health and spot the early signs of oral cancer.” By taking the lead in raising public awareness of oral cancer, its early signs and symptoms, and associated risk factors,

dental hygienists are helping to meet the global challenge of saving lives, showing the world that, together, we can make a difference.

Serving the profession since 1963, CDHA is the collective national voice of close to 27,000 registered dental hygienists working in Canada, directly representing 17,500 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 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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