

## **Colorado Dental Hygienists Association**

The Colorado Dental Hygienists' Association's (CDHA) mission is to advance the art and science of dental hygiene by ensuring access to quality oral healthcare, increase the awareness of cost effective benefits of prevention, and to promote the highest standards of dental hygiene education, licensure, practice, and research.

Dental hygiene curriculum includes over 2000 hours of education in an accredited program, with 600 hours of clinical experience. Course work includes chemistry, anatomy and physiology, biochemistry, microbiology, pathology, nutrition, pharmacology, periodontology, radiology, pain control, preventive counseling, community health, and basic life support. After passing a rigorous National Board Exam, as well as a Regional and State Exams, the dental hygienist is granted a license to practice.

Dental hygienists provide diagnostic, therapeutic and preventive services, and focus on education as a means of preventing dental disease. We provide services such as prophylaxis (cleaning), sealants and fluoride treatments to help prevent dental disease. We take x rays and read them to form a dental hygiene diagnosis, and use them to make proper and timely referral to the dentist. We perform periodontal therapy such as curettage, to help patients with periodontal disease keep their supporting tissues healthy. Pain management with local anesthesia is an important part of dental hygiene practice.

Since 1986 direct access dental hygiene has been available to the citizens of Colorado. There is a growing trend nationwide for dental hygienists to take an even greater role in access to dental care in many different settings. Here in Colorado there are dental hygienists who own and operate their own clinics, work in public health and corporate clinics, hospitals, schools, nursing homes, prisons, and in the traditional setting of the dental office. Many dental hygienists are Medicaid providers as well. The dental hygienist is oftentimes the only licensed provider in many of these clinics, and studies confirm that there is a positive impact on access to quality, safe, and effective dental care.

On the heels of research conducted by the Governor's Scopes of Care Committee, CDHA is introducing a Bill in 2009 to better define the procedures dental hygienists are educated and licensed to perform, and effectively modernize the language in the Dental Practice Law.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact our member representatives or our lobbyists. We thank you for your time and service to the people of Colorado.

### **Contact Information**

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