

National Standards for Long-Term Care: Addressing Oral Health for Overall Health

Recommendations at a Glance



Oral health is vital for overall health and well-being. Poor oral health in people living in long-term care homes is multifactorial in nature. It seldom results from a single underlying condition or cause, but rather from a combination of contributing and predisposing factors.

As essential primary health care professionals, dental hygienists working in long-term care homes identify many oral health issues and concerns that are not seen by other health professionals. They know that it is more important than ever to accelerate strong, consistent, and tangible strategies to meet the oral health needs of Canada's aging population and the more than 400,000 residents in long-term care homes across the country. They also know that these improvements in oral health should be made in person-centred and evidence-informed ways.

CDHA's recommendations for addressing oral health within national standards for long-term care services cover five critical aspects of service delivery. Collaboration among all jurisdictions and new targeted federal funding and accountability systems will be necessary to realize these goals.



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

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CARE TEAMS WITH DENTAL HYGIENISTS

1

Professional staffing and interprofessional collaboration in long-term care homes should incorporate dental hygienists to ensure a comprehensive program of oral health services to meet the assessed oral health needs of residents.

ORAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR RESIDENTS

2

Oral health care services for long-term care home residents must include oral health assessments, the development of personalized oral health care plans, and the provision of daily mouth care by dental hygienists.

ORAL HEALTH EDUCATION FOR STAFF

3

All direct-care workers in long-term care homes should receive education on oral health. This education should be developed and delivered by dental hygienists.

ORAL HEALTH IN LEGISLATION PERTAINING TO LONG-TERM CARE HOMES

4

Legislation pertaining to long-term care homes across the country must reflect minimum standards for oral health care and related aspects.

ORAL HEALTH IN ACCREDITATION STANDARDS FOR LONG-TERM CARE HOMES

5

Accreditation standards specific to oral health services in long-term care settings should be developed and enforced.

READ OUR DISCUSSION PAPER AT [CDHA.CA/ORALHEALTHFORSENIORS](https://cdha.ca/oralhealthfor seniors)