

ADHA Emphasizes Critical Role of Hygienist in Dental Hygiene Diagnosis

CHICAGO, November 3, 2016 —The American Dental Hygienists' Association (ADHA) has released a new white paper that underscores the ability of the dental hygienist to perform dental hygiene diagnosis as part of the oral care team working to ensure that every patient is evaluated and treated, based on their individual oral health needs. According to the ADHA paper, dental hygiene diagnosis is an essential part of dental hygiene care and scope of practice, yet confusion exists on how to implement it into daily practice.

The ADHA has created this white paper to help practicing dental hygienists understand and use dental hygiene diagnoses in their daily practice across a wide variety of care settings. In addition, the organization is providing tools and resources for dental hygiene educators to help them teach dental hygiene diagnosis to students. The organization is the profession's national voice informing policymakers as they consider legislation related to the dental hygiene scope of practice. To download a copy of the ADHA Dental Hygiene Diagnosis white paper, [please click here](#).

ADHA defines dental hygiene diagnosis as "the identification of an individual's health behaviors, attitudes, and oral health care needs for which a dental hygienist is educationally qualified and licensed to provide. The dental hygiene diagnosis requires evidence-based critical analysis and interpretation of assessments to reach conclusions about the patient's dental hygiene treatment needs."

"Through dental hygiene diagnoses, dental hygienists educate patients on behaviors that minimize risks of oral infections, help detect risk factors for infectious diseases and cancers of the head and neck," said ADHA president Betty Kabel, RDH, BS. "This elevates the role of the dental hygienist within the overall healthcare system, as we seek to expand the access to oral care. It's important to utilize the dental hygiene diagnoses regularly and consistently to ensure optimal care for our patients."

While dental hygienists' rigorous education prepares them to provide preventive and therapeutic oral health services, the profession's scope of practice varies from state to state. ADHA emphasizes that it is important for dental hygienists to fully utilize their education to provide oral health care services that fall within their scope, especially for populations that lack adequate access to oral health care services. The organization also advocates for using the new white paper as a resource by policymakers involved in decisions about state practice acts.

For more information, please visit adha.org.

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About the American Dental Hygienists' Association

The American Dental Hygienists' Association (ADHA) is the largest national organization representing the professional interests of more than 185,000 dental hygienists across the country. Dental hygienists are preventive oral health professionals, licensed in dental hygiene, who provide educational, clinical and therapeutic services that support total health through the promotion of optimal oral health. For more information about the ADHA, dental hygiene or the link between oral health and general health, visit the ADHA at www.adha.org.