

## **BCDHA WELCOMES DENTAL THERAPISTS INTO THE ASSOCIATION**

BURNABY—The British Columbia Dental Hygienists' Association (BCDHA) is excited to welcome Dental Therapists (DTs) as members of the Association, effective immediately.

“While the number of Dental Therapists in B.C. is small, we believe that the contributions of this profession within the health care system are vast,” said Susan Schmitz, BCDHA Chair. “Recognizing the synergies between our professions, with this collaboration we can help to support integration and advancement of the Dental Therapy profession in B.C.”

Dental Therapists play a unique and essential role on the oral health team. There are approximately 300 of these primary health care professionals throughout Canada, and they play a vital role in managing dental pain and maintaining the overall health of their patients, many of whom reside in rural and northern communities. Dental Therapists provide therapeutic dental treatment services, disease prevention, and oral health promotion programs that focus on maintaining and improving health.

The Dental Therapy scope of practice includes:

- Management of dental emergencies to alleviate pain
- Assessment, prescription, exposure, and interpretation of x-rays that support diagnosis, treatment planning, and case presentation for individualized care.
- Diagnosis of tooth decay and infections
- Restorative dentistry
- Extraction of primary teeth and uncomplicated extractions of permanent teeth
- Placement and removal of sutures
- Treatment for patients with mild to moderate periodontal disease
- Preventative services, including teeth cleaning, polishing, fluoride applications, pit and fissure sealants and individualized client-centered education and product recommendations
- Endodontics limited to (a) Pulpotomy – limited to primary teeth only (b) Pulpotomy for emergency treatment only – permanent teeth (c) Pulp capping

In British Columbia, DTs can only work for the First Nations Health Authority which has prohibited their ability to work in B.C.'s many other rural underserved communities. BCDHA looks forward to working with the government and regulators to expand the ability for all British Columbians to access these key oral health providers.

“We have seen, particularly through COVID-19, that our work with Indigenous British Columbians is an important part of the primary health care of individuals and communities,” said Brenda Isaac, DT Lead for BCDHA. “As education programs focus on building new Dental Therapy programs, it is time for us to have a conversation about how we can better utilize these skilled set of oral health providers.”

If you are a DT in B.C. who has chosen to work as a hygienist because of a lack of employment options, please feel welcome to identify yourself to BCDHA to be included in advocacy and discussions surrounding the future of the profession.

For More Information:

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