



Proposal to Update the CDHBC Regulations and Bylaws: Registrant FAQs

1. How will these proposed changes benefit the public?

The proposed changes to the CDHBC Regulations and Bylaws are centered around enhancing access, clarity, and choice for the public. By removing the 365-Day Rule and the 'dentist-on-site' requirement for L/A administration, as well as clarifying the regulations around radiographs and adding prescribing ability for dental hygiene practitioners, these changes will:

- ✓ Enhance public safety,
- ✓ Increase access to care for the public,
- ✓ Clarify the current scope of practice, and
- ✓ Support choice for the public and for dental hygienists.

2. When are the proposed changes coming into effect?

It's very important to understand that this is only a proposal at this stage. No changes have been made and dental hygienists must continue to follow the current regulations and bylaws. The College is working diligently to move the process forward, but ultimately it will be up to the government to decide when to consider the proposal and whether or not to accept it.

While the government's exact timeline is unknown, we are hopeful it will be within the next year. If government accepts the amendments, they will be posted for a consultation period of three months. After that time, the government can request or make further amendments.



3. I have a Full registration. How will this proposal change the way I practice?

If you are a registrant in the Full or Conditional category, you will be automatically moved into the “Registered Dental Hygienist” category of registration. This change will not affect your ability to practice in your chosen setting.

The regulation changes will have a positive impact on your practice. No longer will you be bound by the 365-Day Rule, so you will be able to provide dental hygiene care regardless of whether the patient has seen a dentist within the last year. It’s important to note that regular dental exams are still considered best practice and should take place based on client need. It’s also expected that dental hygienists continue to make referrals as appropriate.

If you are certified to provide L/A, you can provide L/A to your clients even if there is no dentist on site. This ensures that dental hygienists are always able to provide appropriate pain management to their clients.

By including the taking and interpreting of radiographs in the regulation, any question of the ability of a dental hygienist to self-initiate radiographs has been removed.

Lastly, these changes will mean that as long as a Registered Dental Hygienist is working in collaboration with a Dental Hygiene Practitioner, they can practice independently and provide care to those who may not be able to access care through a dental office.

4. I own an independent practice. How will this proposal affect my practice?

If you are a registrant in the 365-Exempt category of registration, you will automatically be moved into the “Dental Hygiene Practitioner” category and will be able to continue in your independent practice. Only registrants in this category will be allowed to be the primary owner and operator of an independent practice.

Dental Hygiene Practitioners will have the ability to obtain education around prescribing and upon successful completion, will be able to prescribe drugs routinely used in dental hygiene practice.

With the removal of the 365-Day Rule and the ‘dentist-on-site’ requirement for L/A administration, it will mean that as a Dental Hygiene Practitioner, you can hire Registered Dental Hygienists who will be able to provide care within your practice without any barriers.



5. I'm an independent practice owner but do not have my 365-Exempt registration, what will happen to my practice?

Our goal is not to change the practice settings of any dental hygienist. If these proposed changes are accepted, there will be a special “grandfathered” category of registration for individuals who are not 365-Exempt but who own an independent practice. Once in that category we will work with you to determine pathways to achieving your Dental Hygiene Practitioner registration. If you are in this situation, we encourage you to contact the CDHBC for options as soon as possible.

6. How are you going to define an “independent practice”?

We are proposing that an “independent dental hygiene practice” be defined, for the purposes of the “Dental Hygiene Practitioner” registration, as one that offers ongoing dental hygiene services, advertises itself as an independent practice, directly bills clients for services, and is responsible for the maintenance of client records. The practice may or may not be incorporated. Dental hygienists who work on contract in a dental office will likely not be considered as an independent practice but it will be dependent on how the contract is arranged.

Further details on how an independent practice will be defined for the purposes of the “Dental Hygiene Practitioner” category, will be made available as we continue through the consultative process. If you have a unique practice setting where it may not be clear if it is an independent practice or not, we encourage you to contact the College to inform us of your situation.

7. I have a diploma and want to open a dental hygiene practice, can I?

If this proposal is approved, only Dental Hygiene Practitioners can own and operate a dental hygiene practice. If you are interested in becoming registered as a Dental Hygiene Practitioner, pathways to meet the criteria will be made available.

The Dental Hygiene Practitioner (DHP) will require education equivalent to a Dental Hygiene Degree. Registrants who are in the 365-Exempt category have already proven their degree equivalency and will be automatically moved into the Dental Hygiene Practitioner category. Any registrant may pursue the DHP registration category, but diploma graduates will have to complete their degree or meet other educational requirements to become a Dental Hygiene Practitioner.



8. I have a diploma; under this proposal will I need to eventually get a degree?

There will be no requirement for existing registrants to get a degree, or to change their practice setting. You can choose to be in the Registered Dental Hygienist category and practice collaboratively. However, if you want to obtain your degree or explore other pathways to obtain your Dental Hygiene Practitioner registration, there will be opportunities for you to do that. **Both categories of registrants are highly valued and important.**

We believe that as the dental hygiene scope of practice becomes more complex, new graduates will need a dental hygiene degree in order to be adequately prepared for dental hygiene practice and to enter the profession. We will continue to work with our educational institutions and national stakeholders to move towards the goal of degree for entry to practice.

9. Under this proposal, how is the College planning to regulate L/A?

The College is proposing to move to a 'certification' model of regulating L/A. Under this proposal, registrants already in the Full and 365-Exempt registration categories will automatically be certified to administer L/A. They will have the ability to administer L/A without a dentist on site. Details are still being worked out regarding the requirements to maintain certification.

Registrants in the current Conditional category of registration will still need to take an approved L/A course in order to obtain their L/A certification; however, there will no longer be a two-year time period to do so.

Our BC dental hygiene programs will continue to include L/A in their programs and their graduates will receive L/A certification when they register with the College.

10. I want to be able to prescribe, how can I do that?

Once you become a Dental Hygiene Practitioner, you will have to successfully complete a specific Prescribing Education Module that will be pre-approved by the CDHBC before you are able to prescribe. More information will be provided to registrants as this becomes available. Alberta dental hygienists currently have a similar model of certification for prescribing and complete a comprehensive education module before they prescribe.

11. What about other scope changes that are not included in this proposal?

Government has advised the College that they are not interested in approving significant scope expansions at this time. The College has considered many scope expansions and has chosen to focus on the ones that we felt were the most achievable and would have the greatest impact on the public's ability to access quality dental hygiene care. Once we are able to implement these very important changes we can begin to consider other changes in future projects.



12. Can I provide feedback on this proposal?

Absolutely! The College will be establishing many ways for you to learn more about this proposal and to provide your feedback. We are in the process of setting dates for both in-person sessions and webinars on this proposal. Please watch the College website and your email for more details on these sessions and other opportunities such as surveys to share your thoughts. Your comments are always welcome via email to the College at cdhbc@cdhbc.com. We look forward to continuing the dialogue with you about this exciting proposal.