

History of CDHBC

On March 7, 1994, the Ministry of Health announced that Cabinet had approved the designation of dental hygiene under the Health Professions Act (HPA). The draft regulation was to circulate for a period of three months for comment. On December 20, 1994, the Ministry of Health announced Cabinet's approval of the Dental Hygienists Regulation and the establishment of the College of Dental Hygienists of British Columbia (CDHBC).

Leading the Way: People & Projects

The founding years of the College were under the guidance of Nancy Harwood, who was the Registrar for CDHBC until December 2003. During this time the framework for the College bylaws, Registrant's Handbook, and internal policies were developed and implemented, including the current QAP Continuing Competency (CC) policies, which the Board approved to be effective January 1, 2004.

The first issue of the ACCESS newsletter was distributed in March 1995 and included an introduction to the Interim Board, the Dental Hygienists Regulation, and to national certification through the newly formed National Dental Hygiene Certification Board (NCDHCB), which was also in the process of establishing itself and developing its first written examination for 1996.

One of the first undertakings of the College was the development of licencing standards for specially qualified dental hygienists in residential care settings. Maxine Borowko, Lynn Guest, Dianne Stojak, and Susanne Sunell worked to research a comprehensive overview of the circumstances and requirements for which dental hygienists would be able to practice without the requirement of a dentist's exam (see 365-Day Rule Exempt). Another important project was the review and refinement of the CC system, for which Nancy Keselyak was the consultant, with assistance from Kerri McCaig and Yvonne Smith.

Within the first two years of its founding, the College received approximately 20 complaints against hygienists. To develop policies and procedures for the Inquiry Committee, contractor and dental hygienist, Fern Hubbard, consulted with the Registered Nurses Association of B.C. and the College of Dental Surgeons of B.C.; Fern also coordinated the first CDHBC examinations in association with Susanne Sunell, who worked on the exam design and development with the assistance of feedback from almost 50 dental hygienists. Fern accepted the role of Deputy Registrar for CDHBC in 1996 and worked with the College until 2003.

Self-Regulation in Action

Many of the initial decisions of the College were guided by the registrants themselves. When developing the CDHBC logo, a choice of three designs was published in the ACCESS newsletter, and registrant votes were compiled; the winning choice is still in use today. Even the location of the College offices was up for discussion, but after evaluation the pros and cons of the Mainland versus Victoria, including a financial analysis and registrant survey, the decision was made to remain on Vancouver Island in order to minimize disruption and expense for the fledgling College. To keep up with the needs of a growing registrant base (from an initial 1560 registrants to over 3500 registrants in 2014) the College has also grown in size. To accommodate this expansion, in December 2013, the College moved from its original offices to its current location.