

Dental Hygienists Act Receives Proclamation.

The President and Board of Directors of the Nova Scotia Dental Hygienists Association are pleased to announce the Dental Hygienists Act of Nova Scotia and Regulations received proclamation on May 4 with an effective date of May 15th, 2009. This marks the successful completion of a long and challenging legislative process for the NSDHA.

NSDHA want to acknowledge those individuals who have provided leadership during this process, as well as those who have advocated for the dental hygiene profession. Their commitment has been instrumental in dental hygienists now being able to practice to the full extent of their competences in a variety of practice settings. We could not have done it within the support of the membership of the NSDHA.

Please see the news release which gives the highlights of the legislation. In addition a copy of the **regulations** as passed by the Governor in Council is posted on the site.



News Release: **Dental Hygienists Legislation**

The Nova Scotia Government facilitated increased public access to dental hygiene care by proclaiming the *Dental Hygienists Act of Nova Scotia, 2007* and its accompanying Regulations. This legislation will come into effect on May 15, 2009. The Act and Regulations creates the College of Dental Hygienists of Nova Scotia (CDHNS). The College will regulate, license and discipline the 563 licensed practicing dental hygienists in the province.

“The Act permits self-initiated dental hygiene practice and promotes the public interest principles of access, equality, accountability and quality of care, without any increased risk of harm” said College Registrar Patricia Grant.

Important aspects of the Legislation include:

Public Accountability – Public Representation on Council

Increased Access – Self Initiation

Quality Assurance – Continuing Competency

This change brings dental hygiene legislation in line with most provinces in Canada and will allow dental hygienists to provide dental hygiene care in under-served areas, addressing a need that has long been recognized by the Nova Scotia Dental Hygienists Association (NSDHA), other health care professionals, various stakeholders and the government. As well as continuing to provide care in

dental offices, over time it is expected that new practice environments for dental hygienists in Nova Scotia will emerge.

“Increasing access to care, by removing unnecessary barriers and promoting a collaborative approach has been the objective in seeking legislative changes by the NSDHA for a very long time.” said NSDHA President Karen Wolf “Now dental hygienists will be able to establish mobile practices to visit clients who are home bound or in long term care; stand alone dental hygiene clinics in rural or urban settings, community health centres and cultural communities.”

In addition increased access to dental hygiene services increases the opportunity for more people in Nova Scotia to be screened for oral health problems that may have a direct impact on their overall health. Dental hygienists will work with their clients to establish an oral health care plan that will include education, disease prevention, therapeutic interventions and appropriate referrals.

“Dental hygienists will continue to work collaboratively with other health care professionals to ensure that the oral health care needs of Nova Scotians are addressed safely, effectively and efficiently.”

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