

# Patient Care Competencies

## Competencies for the Dental Hygienist

(Adapted from *Competencies for Entry into the Profession of Dental Hygiene* approved by the 2003 American Dental Education Association House of Delegates)

### Introduction

Competence is an acceptable, measurable defined level of special skill and knowledge derived from education, experience, role modeling and overall socialization. To be competent, an entry level dental hygienist must perform at or above the acceptable defined standards.

This document serves as the foundation of the Dental Hygiene curriculum and defines the expected knowledge base and skill set of a student graduating from Allegany College of Maryland's Dental Hygiene Program.

### DOMAIN I: Professionalism and Ethics (PE)

**Major Competency:** The graduating dental hygienist must use and advance professional knowledge and skills to serve the patient and public using sound ethical judgments based on evidence-based knowledge.

**Supporting Competencies:** Specifically, the dental hygiene graduate must be able to:

PE.1 Integrate the ADHA Code of Ethics in all endeavors.

PE.2 Comply with all state and federal laws, recommendations and regulations governing the practice of dentistry and dental hygiene.

PE.3 Communicate effectively with individuals and groups from diverse populations both verbally and in writing.

PE.4 Serve all patients without discrimination, appreciating the diversity of the population

PE.5 Assume responsibility for dental hygiene actions based on accepted scientific theories as well as the accepted standard of care.

PE.6 Provide accurate, consistent, and complete documentation for assessment, diagnosis, planning, implementation, and evaluation of dental hygiene services.

PE.7 Ensure the privacy of the patient during treatment and maintain the confidentiality of records.

PE.8 Provide quality assurance mechanisms for health services.

### DOMAIN II: Health Promotion and Community Involvement (HP and CI)

**Major Competency:** The graduating dental hygienist must promote lifestyle changes of individuals and society to attain optimal health utilizing a combination of educational, economic, organizational, and environmental strategies.

**Supporting Competencies:** Specifically, the dental hygiene graduate must be able to:

HP.1 Promote and role model to the public preventive health behaviors necessary for optimal oral and general health and wellness.

HP.2 Utilize an interdisciplinary approach to refer patients who may have a physiological, psychological, and/or social problem for a comprehensive evaluation.

HP.3 Identify the oral health needs of individuals and assist them in the development of appropriate and individualized self-care regimens.

CI.1 Assess the oral health needs of the community and the quality and availability of resources and services.

CI.2 Plan, implement, and evaluate community service programs in a variety of settings.

CI.3 Evaluate the outcomes of community-based programs and implement strategies to improve access to care.

CI.4 Evaluate reimbursement mechanisms and their impact on the patient's access to oral health care.

CI.5 Participate in the public policy and/or legislative process.

CI.6 Provide screening, referral, and educational services that allow patients to access the resources of the health care system.

CI.7 Provide dental hygiene services in a variety of settings.

### **DOMAIN III: Dental Hygiene Process of Care (PC)**

**Major Competency:** The graduating dental hygienist must demonstrate the skills necessary to carry out the Dental Hygiene Process of Care which include assessment, dental hygiene diagnosis, planning, implementation, and evaluation of diverse patient populations.

**Supporting competencies:** Specifically, the dental hygiene graduate must be able to:

#### **Assessment**

PC.1 Systematically collect, analyze and accurately record data on the general, oral and psychosocial health status of a variety of patients using methods consistent with medical-legal and ethical principles.

- Obtain, review, update and interpret an accurate medical, family, social, radiological, pharmacological, and dental history, recognizing any health conditions that require special consideration prior to or during dental hygiene care.
- Obtain and record accurate vital signs
- Perform a thorough extra- and intra-oral examination, recognizing abnormalities.
- Accurately perform an examination of the teeth and record the results.
- Evaluate the periodontium and identify conditions that compromise periodontal health.
- Evaluate the need for radiographs and accurately interpret findings.
- Identify patients at risk for a medical emergency and take appropriate precautions to minimize those risks.
- Recognize predisposing and etiological risk factors that require intervention to prevent and control disease.
- Assess patient concerns, goals, values, and preferences to guide patient care.
- Analyze health conditions and medications that impact overall patient care.

#### **Dental Hygiene Diagnosis**

PC.2 Use critical decision making skills to identify existing problems, potential problems, etiologic and contributing factors, as well as establish realistic goals and treatment strategies to facilitate optimal oral health.

- Analyze and interpret the data to formulate a dental hygiene diagnosis in conjunction with the dentist and other health professionals as appropriate.
- Obtain and document consultations as appropriate.

#### **Planning**

PC.3 Collaborate with the patient, dentist, and other health professionals to formulate evidence based, individualized treatment plan.

- Establish a prioritized, planned sequence of care based on the patient's health, oral conditions, standards of care, and the patient's desires for outcome.
- Discuss with the patient the etiology, prognosis, treatment, and treatment alternatives, allowing for modifications when appropriate.
- Obtain informed consent.

## **Implementation**

PC.4 Provide treatment that includes preventive and therapeutic services designed to achieve and maintain oral health and assist the patient in achieving oral health goals.

- Expose, process, and interpret radiographs of diagnostic quality.
- Adhere to accepted infection control procedures.
- Apply principles of instrumentation and ergonomics to remove deposits without trauma to hard or soft tissues.
- Control pain and anxiety through use of accepted techniques.
- Provide dental hygiene services that can be performed legally in the state of Maryland.
- Manage medical emergencies.

## **Evaluation**

PC.5 If implemented, evaluate the effectiveness of preventive, therapeutic, and educational services and modify as needed.

- Determine the outcomes of dental hygiene services using indices and examinations.
- Evaluate patient satisfaction with the dental hygiene care received and the treatment outcomes.
- Determine appropriate preventive maintenance intervals.
- Provide additional treatment and referrals based on the evaluation findings.

## **DOMAIN IV: Professional Growth and Development (PGD)**

**Major Competency:** The graduating dental hygienist must contribute to improving knowledge, skills, and values of the profession of dental hygiene.

**Supporting Competencies:** Specifically, the dental hygiene graduate must be able to:

PGD.1 Participate in professional organizations and advance the profession through leadership and community service activities.

PGD.2 Identify and participate in alternate careers for dental hygienists in nontraditional settings.

PGD.3 Evaluate professional issues and scientific literature in order to make evidence-based decisions that advance the profession of dental hygiene.

PGD.4 Assume the responsibility for professional growth through lifelong learning.

PGD.5 Promote the values of the profession to the public and other organizations both within and outside of the dental profession.