

# PREPARING FOR PUBLIC HEALTH DENTAL HYGIENIST CERTIFICATION

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## 1. DETERMINE QUALIFICATIONS TO BECOME A PUBLIC HEALTH DENTAL HYGIENIST (PHDH)

- A desire to provide dental hygiene services in a public health setting.
- Two years of dental hygiene work experience or equivalent of 4,000 hours as a dental hygienist.

## 2. COMPLETE TRAINING REQUIREMENTS (42 hours of continuing education credit)

- A total of 29 continuing education (CE) hours in medical emergencies in the dental office, pediatric dentistry, pharmacology, medical record keeping, oral pathology and geriatric dentistry.
- A total of five CE hours of your choice of geriatric dentistry, cultural competency, nutrition for geriatric and special needs patients, communication techniques with non-English speaking patients, and teledentistry.
- Eight hour in-person review course and PHDH certification exam.

[Additional information at IDHA](#)

## 3. PREPARING FOR PRACTICE AS A PHDH

- PHDH certificate on file at supervising dentist's office and with the PHDH certificate available to the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) upon request.
- Execute a PHDH supervision agreement between supervising dentist(s) and PHDH.
  - ✓ Request template agreement from Illinois Primary Health Care Association (IPHCA).
- Both parties sign agreement.



# AFTER CERTIFICATION

## WHAT NEXT?

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### Develop the Public Health Supervision Agreement

#### 1. DEVELOP POLICY GUIDELINES AND/OR STANDING ORDERS

- What will be considered standard provision of care?
- What populations will be served?
- If multiple locations, are standing orders the same?
- How will referrals for dental emergencies be handled?
- How are referrals and follow-up care managed?



#### 2. DEVELOP COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION PROTOCOLS

- How will the PHDH and DDS/DMD communicate?
- How will immediate concerns be managed?
- How often will DDS/DMD and PHDH meet to discuss cases?
  - ✓ Illinois Practice Act mandates there be at minimum quarterly meetings scheduled to discuss cases.
  - ✓ When might more frequent meetings be expected?

#### 3. DEVELOP PROTOCOL FOR PATIENT DOCUMENTATION AND DENTAL RECORD MAINTENANCE

- How will patient dental records be accessed?
- What is the process for dental record storage?
- Is there protocol for documentation?
  - ✓ Consent form signed – documentation that patient was informed of care provided by PHDH.
  - ✓ Documentation that the patient was informed that the dentist will not see the patient and that PHDH care would not be provided if other options were available.
  - ✓ Treatment provided is appropriately documented.
  - ✓ Documentation for dentist referral and/or need for follow-up care
  - ✓ Patient provided information sheet at end of appointment and said action documented in dental record.

## 4. DEVELOP SITE SPECIFIC MEDICAL EMERGENCY PROTOCOLS

- Who are the responsible staff for each site and what are their roles?
- Who gets informed of medical emergencies?
- How is the incident documented?

## 5. EXECUTE PHDH SUPERVISION AGREEMENT BETWEEN PHDH SUPERVISING DENTIST(S) AND PHDH

- Signed PHDH Supervision Agreement kept on file with availability to supervising dentist and PHDH.
- Copy of PHDH agreement is submitted to IPHCA.

## Follow PHDH Certification Requirements

### 1. PHDH REPORT TO ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

- At the completion of a project or minimally, once a year, complete and submit the [Annual Report of PHDH Services and Location of Work](#) to IDPH.

### 2. COMPLETE REQUIRED ANNUAL CE CREDIT CLASSES

- PHDHs are required to complete four hours of CE credit courses related to public health per year in addition to completion of the required CE credit hours for relicensure.

## Roles of the Public Health Dental Hygienist

### 1. ORAL HEALTH EDUCATOR

- Patient oral health care instructions
- Group oral health instructions
  - ✓ Diabetic patients
  - ✓ Older adults
  - ✓ Pregnant women
  - ✓ New parents
- Nutrition counseling related to oral health
- School-based oral health instructions

## 2. PATIENT MANAGEMENT

- Referrals
- Consultations
- Management of follow-up care

## 3. CLINICIAN

- Patient screenings and assessments
- Oral prophylactic procedures
- Radiographs
- Sealant placement
- Fluoride application

## 4. INTERPROFESSIONAL COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE

- Screening and assessment for medical patients.
- Manage referrals for preventive and restorative care.
- Fluoride varnish or silver diamine fluoride applications for pediatric patients.

