

CANADIAN DENTAL
ASSISTANTS ASSOCIATION



ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE
DES ASSISTANTS DENTAIRES

CDAA Statement Covid-19: Preparedness in the Dental Practice

The Canadian Dental Assistants' Association (CDAA) understands the Covid-19 pandemic is evolving rapidly and that the impact to the oral health sector is profound and complex. Over the past several months, dental assistants across Canada have expressed their concerns about their health and safety as they prepare to return to practice in the Covid-19 environment. Our members are returning to practice faced with many questions and much uncertainty.

The CDAA fully acknowledges that dental practices across Canada could not operate effectively without the contributions and sacrifices made by dental assistants. That is why, to ensure the health and safety of all members of the oral healthcare team, the CDAA champions the call for inclusion of dental assisting organizations as stakeholders in all decision-making that will impact the practice of our professional members. For this reason, the CDAA advocates at the national level to bring forward the perspective of dental assistants to industry stakeholders. Dental assistants are essential, high-risk frontline healthcare workers and as such, they should be part of consultations on decisions that impact their practice, both at the organizational level and in their workplace, as valued staff members of each dental office.

Dental assistants in many parts of the country have received formal education and are licensed to provide the services they are trained in. Formally-trained dental assistants, specifically trained in infection prevention and control protocols, have always been important to protecting the public, but they are especially important now in the Covid-19 landscape. The CDAA has clearly indicated to our industry colleagues that we are ***opposed*** to the in-office training of clinical personnel being done independently by a dentist or other designated staff member without connecting that training to an ***accredited*** dental assistant training program. The CDAA ***supports*** the call for provincial regulation of formally educated professional dental assistants in all provincial/territorial jurisdictions in Canada. Also, the CDAA ***supports*** policies and legislation confirming that the public is best protected through the exclusive use of RDA/CDAs in a clinical setting and in providing effective infection, prevention and control in dental practice.

CDAA ***supports*** the need for consistent guidelines across Canada for all oral healthcare staff that most often work together in the same work environment and deserve the same high level of protection from work-related illness and injury and same respect for their contributions to the oral healthcare team. This is why CDAA ***advocates*** that all oral health profession regulatory bodies work collaboratively to develop guidelines that address the concerns of all oral healthcare professionals.

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The health risk to front line oral healthcare workers during the Covid-19 pandemic is high. Ensuring that the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) is available and environmental controls such as air quality control are in place is the right of every worker. The CDAA *advocates* that employers ensure their clinical staff is protected with the highest appropriate level of PPE. As dental air quality doesn't change from province to province, the CDAA has *recommended* to both employers and regulators that standardized air changes per hour with corresponding settle times be instituted across all provincial/territorial jurisdictions to guide a formally-trained dental assistant in disinfecting the operatory following aerosol generating procedures.

It is CDAA's view that protection for the public cannot be achieved without high quality protection for dental staff.

The CDAA will continue to advocate for dental assistants and will strive to collaborate with our industry partners to develop guidelines that minimize risk for all members of the oral healthcare team in light of the challenges facing the dental industry, due to Covid-19.