

# Standards of Practice



## CONTINUITY OF CARE

### STANDARD STATEMENT

The dental hygienist ensures continuity of care and only discontinues care in a manner that is safe and ethical.

### PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

The dental hygienist must...

1. Support the patient's right to choose their provider of **dental hygiene services** by:
  - a) Informing the patient of the option to receive ongoing care from a specific dental hygienist; and
  - b) Recognizing when the patient has an expectation of ongoing care with the dental hygienist and taking reasonable steps to ensure that this is achieved.
2. Ensure the patient is informed of the dental hygienist who will be providing care.
3. Take reasonable steps to ensure that the patient has an alternate oral health care provider or has been given options to arrange for an alternate oral health care provider in the event that the dental hygienist leaves a practice.
4. Direct a patient to contact the College when the patient is searching for a dental hygienist who was their previous care provider.

The dental hygienist who discontinues care for the patient must...

5. Not discontinue care based on:
  - a) A protected ground of discrimination as per the [Alberta Human Rights Act](#);
  - b) The patient's values, life circumstances, or culture;
  - c) The patient's failure to keep appointments or pay outstanding fees unless advance notice has been given to the patient; or
  - d) Relocation of their dental hygiene practice, if the patient can reasonably attend the new location.
6. Give reasonable advance notice of service discontinuation to the patient.
7. Document the reason for discontinuing care in the patient **record**.

The dental hygienist who closes or transfers ownership of a dental hygiene practice must...

8. Ensure patients have ongoing access to their **health information** and are informed of how their health information can be accessed.
9. Provide the College with evidence of compliance with the Standards of Practice including but not limited to:
  - a) Reasonable notice provided to patients;
  - b) Steps taken to ensure continuity of care;
  - c) Location and disposition of patient records;
  - d) Manner in which patients may access their records; and
  - e) Any other matter relevant to the closure as may be requested by the College.

## PATIENT EXPECTATION

The patient can expect that the dental hygienist supports the patient's choice of dental hygiene care provider. In the event that the dental hygienist discontinues care, the patient will be given options for alternate oral health care providers to continue the patient's care.

## GLOSSARY

**DENTAL HYGIENE SERVICES:** Any service that falls within the practice of the profession of dental hygienists as outlined in the [Health Professions Act](#). (Schedule 5, section 3)

**HEALTH INFORMATION:** Defined in the [Health Information Act](#) as one or both of the following:

- (i) Diagnostic, treatment and care information
- (ii) Registration information

**RECORD:** As defined in the [Health Information Act](#), means a record of health information in any form and includes notes, images, audiovisual recordings, x-rays, books, documents, maps, drawings, photographs, letters, vouchers and papers, and any other information that is written, photographed, recorded, or stored in any manner, but does not include software or any mechanism that produces records.