

# NHTI – Concord's Community College: Dental Hygiene Program

## Mission, Goals, and Competencies

### Mission

The mission of the NHTI – Concord's Community College Dental Hygiene Program is to advance the mission of the college by providing a learning environment in which each dental hygiene graduate gains the knowledge, skills, and values to provide comprehensive educational, preventive, and therapeutic services reflecting the competencies vital to our community and the profession of dental hygiene.

### Goals

The NHTI Dental Hygiene Program will:

1. Provide a curriculum that integrates general education, biomedical sciences, dental sciences, and the knowledge of current dental hygiene theory and practice and the provision of dental hygiene care.
2. Prepare students to think critically and implement the dental hygiene process of care to promote and maintain oral and systemic health for diverse populations in the collaborative practice of dental hygiene.
3. Prepare students to exercise principles of professional, regulatory, and ethical behavior in implementing oral health care.
4. Prepare students to commit to professional growth and lifelong learning to maintain compliance and competence through self-assessment and evidence-based decision-making in an evolving healthcare system.

### Competencies

The NHTI Dental Hygiene Program has identified and organized the knowledge, skills, and values required for entry into the dental hygiene profession. Students must demonstrate an accepted level of performance of professional activities, which illustrate intellectual, affective, and psychomotor abilities to complete the program and graduate. Competencies define the relevant core content of the curriculum and provide a guideline for faculty decision-making concerning course content, sequencing, and teaching methodologies. Competencies for the dental hygiene graduate are organized in three domains: (1) Professionalism, (2) Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, and (3) Patient Care. Each domain delineates major competencies, supporting competencies, and foundational knowledge. Major competencies refer to the more complex tasks that require multiple abilities and the development of critical thinking skills. These multiple abilities are reflected in supporting competencies, which require a specific level of mastery and foundational knowledge. Foundational knowledge, a prerequisite for supporting competencies, is a result of didactic and laboratory instruction. The foundational knowledge provides a foundation matrix for the entire dental hygiene educational process and is defined in the specific objectives in individual course outlines.

### Professionalism

In the rapidly changing healthcare environment, the dental hygienist must be able to discern ethical issues and problems in dental hygiene practice, utilize critical thinking skills and sound judgment, and communicate with other health care professionals.

1. *Ethics*. The new dental hygiene graduate must be able to discern and manage the ethical issues facing dental hygiene practice in a rapidly changing environment. Specifically, the dental hygiene graduate must be able to:
  - 1.1 – Apply ethical principles relevant to dental hygiene.
  - 1.2 – Integrate the ADHA Code of Ethics in all dental hygiene endeavors.
  - 1.3 – Value every patient's right to dental hygiene care consistently provided at the current standard of care.

- 1.4 – Adhere to local, state, and federal laws, recommendations, and regulations for the practice of dental hygiene.
2. *Information Processing.* The new dental hygiene graduate must be able to acquire and synthesize information in a critical, scientific, and effective manner. Specifically, the dental hygiene graduate must be able to:
  - 2.1 – Critically analyze evidence-based oral health research.
  - 2.2 – Apply evidence-based decision-making to the dental hygiene practice.
  - 2.3 – Evaluate the safety and efficacy of oral health care products, interventions, and treatments.
  - 2.4 – Communicate professional knowledge in verbal and written form using the principles of scientific writing.
3. *Professional Identity.* The new dental hygiene graduate must contribute to improving the knowledge, skills, and values of the profession. Specifically, the dental hygiene graduate must be able to:
  - 3.1 – Advance the profession through leadership, service activities, and affiliation with professional organizations.
  - 3.2 – Assume the roles of the professional dental hygienist; these include educator, researcher, entrepreneur, public health professional, and administrator, as well as those employed in corporate settings.
  - 3.3 – Promote the value and mission of the profession to the community and other stakeholders.
  - 3.4 – Accept responsibility and accountability for self-evaluation of dental hygiene practice.
  - 3.5 – Assume responsibility and value professional growth through continued lifelong learning.
  - 3.6 – Promote positive values of oral health in the overall health and wellness of the patient and community within and outside the profession of dental hygiene.

### **Health Promotion and Disease Prevention**

The dental hygienist serves the community as a partner in the collaborative practice of dental hygiene utilizing an interprofessional, holistic approach. The dental hygienist must be competent in the assessment, performance, and delivery of oral health promotion and disease prevention services for individuals and the community.

4. *The Individual.* The new dental hygiene graduate must provide planned educational services using appropriate interpersonal communication skills and educational strategies to promote optimal health. Specifically, the dental hygiene graduate must be able to:
  - 4.1 – Promote preventive health behaviors by personally maintaining optimal oral and overall health.
  - 4.2 – Identify the oral health needs of individuals and assist them in the development of appropriate and individualized oral self-care plans.
  - 4.3 – Encourage patients to accept responsibility for their health and promote adherence to self-care plans.
5. *The Community.* The new dental hygiene graduate must be able to initiate and assume responsibility for health promotion and disease prevention activities for diverse populations in a variety of settings. Specifically, the dental hygiene graduate must be able to:
  - 5.1 – Critically analyze, identify, and utilize services that promote oral and systemic health and prevent oral diseases and related conditions.
  - 5.2 – Utilize methods that ensure the overall health and safety of the patient and oral health professional in the delivery of care in a variety of settings.
  - 5.3 – Assess community oral health needs and available resources for overall health improvement and access to the healthcare system.
  - 5.4 – Participate in the assessment, planning, implementation, evaluation, and continuous surveillance of

community-based oral health programs.

5.5 – Collaborate with relevant health care providers to screen, educate, and refer patients to access resources of the healthcare system.

5.6 – Value the diversity of the population and address the challenges of access to care.

5.7 – Advocate for effective oral healthcare for underserved populations.

5.8 – Evaluate reimbursement mechanisms and their impact on the patient's access to oral healthcare.

5.9 – Communicate effectively with diverse individuals and groups, serving all persons without discrimination by acknowledging and appreciating diversity.

## **Patient Care**

The dental hygienist is a licensed preventive oral health professional who provides educational and clinical services in the support of optimal health. By utilizing biomedical, clinical, and behavioral sciences, the dental hygienist implements the dental hygiene process of care for diverse populations while maintaining patient confidentiality.

6. *Assessment.* The new dental hygiene graduate must be able to systematically collect, correlate, critically analyze, and document data on the general oral and psychosocial health status for diverse patients using methods consistent with medico-legal-ethical principles. Specifically, the dental hygiene graduate must be able to:
  - 6.1 – Obtain, review, and update a comprehensive health history to include demographic information, vital signs, physical characteristics, and social, medical, and pharmacological history.
  - 6.2 – Identify predisposing and etiological risk factors that require special precautions or considerations for dental hygiene care.
  - 6.3 – Perform an extraoral and intraoral examination and accurately document the findings.
  - 6.4 – Perform and document an examination of the hard tissue including dental charting, occlusion, and assessment of hard and soft deposits.
  - 6.5 – Perform and document an examination of the periodontium.
  - 6.6 – Assess the need for radiographs, distinguish normal from abnormal radiographic findings, and correlate with clinical examination.
  - 6.7 – Expose radiographs of diagnostic quality.
  - 6.8 – Evaluate patient risk factors for oral diseases and conditions.
  - 6.9 – Obtain necessary intraoral photographs.
  - 6.10 – Take impressions and fabricate study models.
  - 6.11 – Assess the need for pain and anxiety management.
  - 6.12 – Determine the need for consultation or referral to appropriate healthcare professionals.
  - 6.13 – Identify patients at risk for nutritional conditions using assessment information.
  - 6.14 – Identify patients at risk for medical emergencies and take appropriate precautions to minimize the risks.
  - 6.15 – Analyze and interpret the data, obtain consultations when appropriate, and formulate a dental hygiene diagnosis based on patient needs as related to oral.

7. *Planning.* The new dental hygiene graduate must be able to formulate a comprehensive dental hygiene care plan that is evidence-based and patient-centered. Specifically, the dental hygiene graduate must be able to:
  - 7.1 – Prioritize patient needs and establish oral health goals with the patient, family, or guardian as an active participant.
  - 7.2 – Plan treatments that reflect the influence of behavioral, social, and cultural differences in the provision of dental healthcare.
  - 7.3 – Formulate a comprehensive, patient-centered dental hygiene care plan that is based on scientific evidence and all relevant diagnostic data, and revise plans as appropriate.
  - 7.4 – Establish a planned sequence of educational, preventive, and clinical dental hygiene services collaboratively with the patient based on the dental hygiene diagnosis.
  - 7.5 – Communicate the care plan to the dentist and/or interprofessional healthcare team members to determine its congruence with the overall plan for oral healthcare.
  - 7.6 – Obtain informed consent after a thorough case presentation.
8. *Implementation.* The new dental hygiene graduate must be able to provide specialized care that includes educational, preventative, and therapeutic services designed to assist the patient in achieving and maintaining oral health goals. Specifically, the dental hygiene graduate must be able to:
  - 8.1 – Practice infection control procedures in accordance with standards of care.
  - 8.2 – Apply the principles of dental hygiene instrumentation to remove deposits without trauma to hard and soft tissues.
  - 8.3 – Utilize radiographs of diagnostic quality.
  - 8.4 – Control pain and anxiety during treatment through the use of accepted clinical techniques and appropriate behavioral management strategies.
  - 8.5 – Select and administer appropriate chemotherapeutic agents within the scope of dental hygiene practice.
  - 8.6 – Provide care for oral prostheses.
  - 8.7 – Fabricate custom trays and perform in-office whitening.
  - 8.8 – Manage medical emergencies in the patient care environment.
  - 8.9 – Provide dental hygiene interventions to prevent or control oral disease.
  - 8.10 – Educate patients to prevent and control risk factors that contribute to oral disease and systemic conditions.
9. *Evaluation.* The new dental hygiene graduate must be able to critically evaluate the effectiveness of implemented educational, preventive, and therapeutic services and make modifications as necessary. Specifically, the dental hygiene graduate must be able to:
  - 9.1 – Evaluate and document the outcomes of preventive and/or therapeutic dental hygiene interventions in achieving care plan goals.
  - 9.2 – Assess and value patient satisfaction with dental hygiene care and the oral health status achieved.
  - 9.3 – Recommend an appropriate continuing supportive care plan.
  - 9.4 – Identify, recommend, and document referral to relevant healthcare professionals for optimal patient care.
  - 9.5 – Apply quality assurance mechanisms to ensure continuous commitment to optimal oral healthcare.