California Dental Hygienists' Association

Journal

Spring 2026 • Volume 43 • Number 4



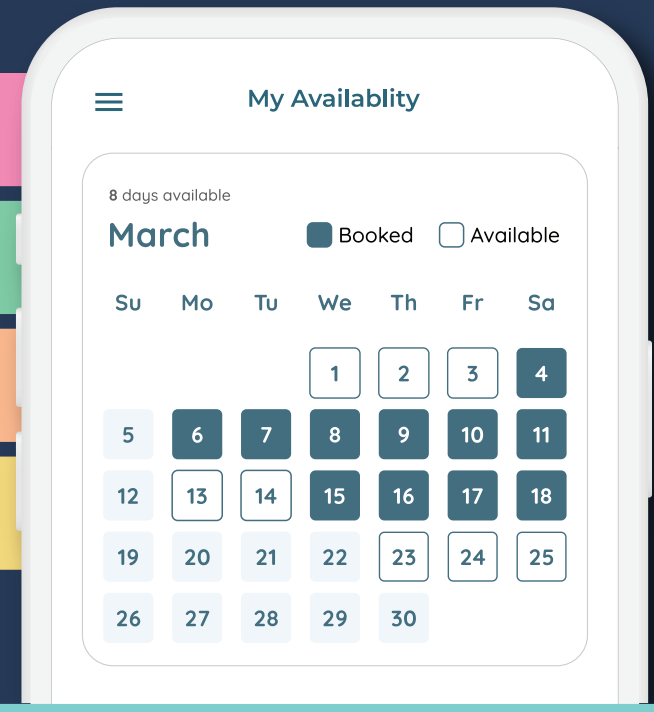
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California Dental Hygienists' Association
The Voice of Dental Hygiene

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Strength in Membership, Power in Advocacy

By: Vickie Kimbrough, PhD, MBA, RDH
2024-2026 CDHA President

Dear Colleagues,

As we continue to navigate an evolving healthcare landscape, one truth remains constant: our collective strength lies in our unity. Membership in our professional community is more than a designation—it is a commitment to excellence, growth, and the advancement of dental hygiene as an essential component of overall health.

Now, more than ever, staying engaged as active members is critical. Membership provides a powerful network of colleagues who share your passion and dedication. But beyond these benefits, membership amplifies our voice. Together, we are stronger, more visible, and more influential in shaping the future of our profession.

Equally important is our awareness of legislative issues that directly impact dental hygiene practice. Decisions made at the state and national levels can affect our scope of practice, reimbursement, workforce opportunities, and the populations we serve. Remaining informed and involved in advocacy efforts ensures that our perspectives are heard and that we help guide policies that support both providers and patients.

I encourage each of you to take an active role—renew your membership, invite a colleague to join, and stay informed about legislative developments. Attend meetings, respond to calls for action, and consider engaging with policymakers. Advocacy is not reserved for a select few; it is a responsibility we all share.

Together, through strong membership and proactive legislative engagement, we can continue to elevate our profession, expand access to care, and make a lasting impact on public health.

Thank you for your commitment and dedication.



CDHA Legislative/Lobbying Events: What To Expect

By: Susan McLearan, BSDH, MS, RDHAP (ret.)
GRC Co-Chair

CDHA has two organized events providing opportunities for CDHA members to interact with legislators (lawmakers) and the legislative process. They may or may not occur every year but are particularly important when CDHA has sponsored a bill or is opposing a bill. The events are called either Legislative or Lobby Days.

A **Legislative Day or Lobby Day** are titles often used interchangeably. A **Legislative Day** might be one where members and lawmakers (or their representatives) meet to discuss issues important to dental hygiene. A **Lobby Day** might describe a meeting when a group or organization has specific legislation and wants the support of individual legislators. There is little difference in the organization of the events.

Below are examples of two types of events with an explanation of what a member may expect.

It is prudent to block off the date of an event as soon as it is announced to allow flexibility in the time a member is given for the meeting. Based on the availability of legislators, traditionally, Capitol visits have been in March after bills for the legislative session has been introduced. Local district visits may occur during National Dental Hygiene Month in October after the conclusion of the legislative session when lawmakers are often working in their District office.

CDHA Capitol Legislative Or Lobby Day

These events take place in and around our California State Capitol, usually on a Monday. Members may need to travel and potentially stay the night in the Sacramento area.

About a week prior to the event, there is a group meeting via zoom. Talking points and "leave behind" documents are introduced. This is a time for Q & A.

Behind the scenes, staff of Aaron Read & Associates (ARA) will be making appointment for the members with their own legislator(s). The member may have an appointment with their representative in the Assembly, the Senate, or both. CDHA members will need to be patient and flexible as often staff will obtain the meeting time(s) at the last minute.

Before setting out for the Capitol or Legislator's office, a preliminary meeting is held in the office of ARA across the street from the Capitol. There may also be an afternoon debriefing at that location.

With appointments confirmed, the member will be expected to arrive at the designated office early or on-time, but never late. They may have no more than 15 minutes with either the legislator or a staff person. One should not be discouraged if the meeting is with staff as they are usually trusted members who may have more time to meet, ask questions and be able to relay detailed information to the legislator.

Before, after, or between meetings, a CDHA member may be able to sit in on or view a Legislative Committee meeting and experience government at work. If not able to attend a live meeting or committee session the meetings are often broadcast to off-site locations to be seen on monitors in auxiliary office buildings.

CDHA members are asked to take photos with their legislator and/or staff who most often are

pleased to comply. Many CDHA members have taken part in this event over the years and say it is fun, exciting, educational and very much worth their time and effort.

District Office Outreach Legislative or Lobby Day

These events take place closer (maybe not close) to home. In this case, the CDHA member will visit the District Office of the legislator. Senators have the largest districts which may require the CDHA member to travel quite some distance. However, Assembly Districts Offices may be not be convenient either. Components can locate District Offices in advance and try to find represented members living close by. A list of office addresses will be provided.

This event is usually scheduled for a Friday when most legislators have left Sacramento and returned to their home districts. Even if the legislator is not present or able to meet, district staff is available. These staffers are extremely knowledgeable and respondign to constituents is part of their job description.

Legislators want to hear from their own district constituents, not just citizens. District Legislative or Lobby Days are held between business sessions when the Legislator and staff ready and willing to greet members and less districted by legislative activities. It is during this time that planning for the next legislative session takes place and CDHA may need this opportunity to find a legislator who will introduce a bill or persons to listen to CDHA issues.

Making the appointments is challenging for the staff of ARA. Both parties (CDHA members and legislators/staff) are working full schedules that are often filled in advance. It is hoped that CDHA members have been given a heads-up, months in advance, allowing for participation and for flexibility in setting the time of the meetings.

As with the Capitol event, there will be preparatory meetings for explanations, questions and answers. CDHA members will be able to attend a preliminary meeting on-line and will receive talking points and "leave behinds."

CDHA members are encouraged to attend with another CDHA member or constituent. Larger groups are discouraged unless approved by the legislator's office in advance.



Briefing at ARA



Walking to the Capitol



Meeting with Senator and Staff



Final instructions

CODA Standards Distinguish Periodontal Preparation: Dental Hygiene Education vs Predoctoral Dental Education

Purpose

In California, scope-of-practice and workforce discussions sometimes assume that dental and dental hygiene education are equivalent in preparing graduates to deliver periodontal disease prevention and non-surgical periodontal care. A standards-based review of the Commission of Dental Accreditation of the American Dental Association (CODA) "Accreditation Standards for Dental Hygiene Educational Programs" and "Standards for Dental Educational Programs" (Effective August 8, 2025) reveals these requirements are not written to be interchangeable: the dental hygiene standards are more specific regarding periodontal disease classifications, periodontal maintenance experiences, and the dental hygiene process of care. In practice, predoctoral dental education programs may vary widely in how prevention and non-surgical periodontal care are taught, whereas dental hygiene education is more consistently standardized through CODA requirements and California dental hygiene educational program regulations. Taken together, CODA standards and California regulations demonstrate that the educational expectations for periodontal disease prevention and non-surgical care for dental hygiene educational programs and predoctoral dental programs are not equivalent.

Key Standards-Based Findings

- CODA Dental Hygiene Standards require competence in care for all periodontal classifications, including moderate-to-severe periodontal disease, and access to a periodontal patient pool including maintenance and newly diagnosed cases (CODA Dental Hygiene Standard 2-14 and Intent).
- California regulations for dental hygiene educational programs require breadth of patient experience and competency across periodontal classifications (mild, moderate, severe) and specify required curriculum content supporting non-surgical periodontal interventions including soft tissue curettage [California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 16, section 1105.2(e), 16 CCR section 1105.2(d)(3), 16 CCR section 1107(b)(9)(C)].
- CODA Dental Hygiene Standards require that graduates must be competent in the dental hygiene process of care (assessment, analysis, care planning, evidence-based treatment, evaluation, and documentation), and programs must ensure sufficient patient experience, including maintenance appointments to evaluate outcomes (CODA Dental Hygiene Standards 2-8c, 2-8d, 2-9, 2-13, 2-11 and Intent).
- California regulations for dental hygiene educational programs require education in the dental hygiene process of care and defines the desired combination of foundational knowledge, psychomotor skills, communication skills, and professional behaviors and values required that graduates are to possess at graduation [16 CCR section 1105.2(b)].
- CODA Predoctoral Dental Standards require competence within broad, school-defined general dentistry competencies, including "health promotion and disease prevention" and "periodontal therapy." CODA notes that general dentistry competencies "are described broadly" and expects each school "to develop specific competency definitions and assessment methods in the context of the broad scope of general dental practice. "(emphasis added.) (CODA Predoctoral Dental Standards, p. 12; Standards 2-24d, 2-24i).

Standards Snapshot

CODA Dental Hygiene Standards (August 8, 2025)

Requires periodontology and prevention-focused content (e.g., 'periodontology' in dental sciences; 'oral health education and preventive counseling' and 'health promotion') (2-8c, 2-8d).

Requires specific competence in the dental hygiene process of care (2-13).

Explicitly requires periodontal competence across classifications, including moderate-to-severe disease (2-14), and monitored periodontal patient experiences including maintenance and newly diagnosed cases (2-14 Intent; 2-11 Intent).

CODA Predoctoral Dental Standards (August 8, 2025)

Requires competence in general dentistry scope, including 'health promotion and disease prevention' (2-24d) and 'periodontal therapy' (2-24i).

Competencies are described broadly; schools develop specific definitions and assessments (p. 12).

No parallel accreditation-level requirement specifying competence across all periodontal classifications or a periodontal patient-pool requirement stated at the same level of detail within 2-24.

Conclusion and Policy Implication

CODA dental hygiene standards specify classification-based periodontal competencies and maintenance-focused clinical experience, whereas CODA predoctoral dental standards address periodontal therapy within broader, school-defined general dentistry competencies. As a result, CODA standards alone should not be used to assume equivalence when informing California role delineation, supervision, or service-delivery policy. Provider preparedness for preventive and non-surgical periodontal services should be evaluated using both CODA language and California dental hygiene program regulations, which explicitly require classification-based clinical experiences and related non-surgical training.

References (CODA, August 2025)

1. Commission on Dental Accreditation. Accreditation Standards for Dental Hygiene Education Programs. August 2025.
2. Commission on Dental Accreditation. Accreditation Standards for Dental Education Programs (Predoctoral). August 2025.

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Professional Pride: The Value of Membership in the California Dental Hygiene Association



Vickie Kimbrough, BS, MBA, PhD, RDH

President CDHA 2024-2026

I worked as a DA/RDA for 20 years before starting college and becoming licensed as a dental hygienist. During my years as a dental assistant, I paid close attention to how dental hygienists interacted with dentists. I noticed a level of mutual respect when they discussed patient conditions and treatment plans that I did not experience in my role as an assistant. Seeing that difference made a strong impression on me. I wanted to grow into a role where my knowledge, voice, and professional judgment were truly valued.

Over my 33 years as a dental hygienist and educator, I have always seen myself as a professional and an integral member of the oral health care team. Being a dental hygienist has shaped my identity, my standards, and the way I advocated for my patients. Nearly everyone I worked with belonged to their professional organizations, and I believe that involvement is simply part of what it means to take your profession seriously.

For me, becoming an active member of my professional organization was never optional. It felt like a responsibility I owed to myself, my patients, my students, my colleagues, and the community that has given me so much. I am proud to be a professional, and participating as an engaged member of my professional organization is one way I honor that commitment.



Angela Gomez, BS, RDHAP

President-Elect, California Dental Hygienists' Assn.

I have been a registered dental hygienist for over ten years and a CDHA member just as long. Since my time as a student at the University of the Pacific, I have been involved in local community service, and I see CDHA membership as an important way to stay engaged in my professional community. Over the years, I have had the opportunity to serve at both the local and state levels, which has allowed me to learn, connect, and gain a broader perspective on our profession and the challenges that we face. These experiences have shaped my commitment to advocacy and leadership. As I prepare to step into the role of president, I hope to continue advocating for dental hygiene while supporting others and making a meaningful impact. I believe showing up looks different for everyone, whether that means attending continuing education courses, participating in local meetings, or serving as a delegate within a component. Over time, I have seen the significant amount of effort that takes place behind the scenes from those who volunteer with CDHA, and I am grateful for the work that has been accomplished. I am proud to be part of an organization that strengthens our profession and supports its future.



Paul Kim, BSDH, RDH

Speaker of the House

Being a member of the California Dental Hygienists' Association has been a meaningful part of my professional development as a registered dental hygienist. To me, the CDHA represents the highest standards of professionalism, advocacy, and lifelong learning within our field. Through this organization, I have found a community that supports clinical excellence while encouraging ethical practice, continued education, and collaboration among dental hygienists.

I chose to become a dental hygienist because I was looking for a career that felt meaningful and service-driven. Being a hygienist has given me a strong sense of purpose that is rooted in caring for others, educating patients, and making a real difference in their overall health.

Being part of CDHA has deepened my appreciation for professionalism beyond the clinical setting. It has encouraged me to stay informed, engaged, and accountable, while reminding me of the impact dental hygienists have on patient care and public health. Knowing that I am part of an organization that advocates for our profession and promotes high standards has been both motivating and reassuring.

I am proud to be a member of the California Dental Hygienists' Association and grateful to be part of a community that continually works to elevate dental hygiene and support those who practice it.



Lisa Huitron, BSDH, RDH, RDA

LA Component Trustee and SRC Chair

Being a professional dental hygienist extends far beyond clinical skill; it reflects a lifelong commitment to ethics, accountability, and service to both patients and the profession. My journey in dentistry spans more than two decades, beginning as a registered dental assistant and evolving through dental hygiene practice to my current role as a community oral health graduate student. Each stage of my career has shaped my understanding of professionalism as something earned through experience, continued education, and active engagement rather than a title achieved once and left behind.

Membership in a professional organization represents an intentional commitment to uphold the standards that protect our patients and advance our profession. Throughout my career, I have witnessed firsthand how legislative decisions, scope of practice discussions, and workforce challenges directly impact patient care and professional autonomy. Professional organizations provide the structure, advocacy, and collective voice necessary to ensure these decisions are informed by those who understand the realities of clinical practice.

My involvement as a student member has further reinforced the importance of early professional engagement. Students are not future professionals; they are developing professionals now. Encouraging students to join, participate, and lead within professional organizations fosters confidence, accountability, and a deeper understanding of our collective responsibility. Mentorship and student engagement strengthen continuity within the profession, ensuring that

knowledge, advocacy, and leadership are sustained across generations.

Being a member is an active expression of professionalism. It means staying informed, pursuing continuing education, supporting ethical practice, and investing in the growth of others. In an increasingly complex healthcare landscape, professionalism requires unity and participation beyond the operatory. Choosing to be a member is choosing stewardship of the profession, honoring the path that brought us here while actively shaping a stronger, more resilient future for dental hygiene.



Arlene Parker, RDH (ret.)

CDHA Membership Council Chair

OCDHS VP MEMBERSHIP VENDOR RELATIONS

Growing up in a small town in British Columbia, I was unaware of dental hygiene as a career. I first learned about the field from other students in my college dorm and realized it was a perfect opportunity to align my passion for science with a career in healthcare.

Dental Hygiene was a relatively new profession in that region and most local offices did not employ hygienists at the time. New graduates remained in the "big city", Vancouver.

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While studying at the University of Alberta School of Dentistry, my professors emphasized that active membership in professional organizations is essential. Following their guidance, I pursued leadership roles early in my career and have remained committed to the growth of our profession ever since.

Although I had not originally planned to move to the United States, I took the American National Board Exam for Dental Hygiene upon the advice of my faculty. When my husband received an attractive job offer we welcomed the opportunity to relocate to California and escape the brutal Alberta winters. Having taken the board exams in school was a head start to pursuing licensure. When my California RDH license arrived in the mail, joining the CDHA was my top priority. I had worked as the sole hygienist in two offices, and my association membership was important to stay connected with other professionals. I deeply value the opportunity to connect with colleagues and overcome the challenges of workplace isolation.

Throughout my 52 years in dentistry, I've observed California as a leader in setting industry standards and advancing the scope of practice thanks to the dedication of CDHA members. Through this organization, I have connected with incredible, like-minded colleagues whom I am now proud to call friends. Now retired, I continue to volunteer for the CDHA to stay connected with the organization's amazing leaders.

Dental hygiene has an immense potential to grow, but opportunities won't be handed to us. I truly look forward to seeing RDHs increasingly integrated into hospitals and other medical facilities to better serve the public. We are "Better Together"



Michael Long

SF Component-
CDHA Foundation

I joined the California Dental Hygienists' Association as a student in 2004, while completing my education at Santa Rosa Junior College. At the time, I was eager to learn the clinical skills of dental hygiene, but I quickly discovered that CDHA offered something far more powerful: a professional home, a collective voice, and a pathway to leadership.

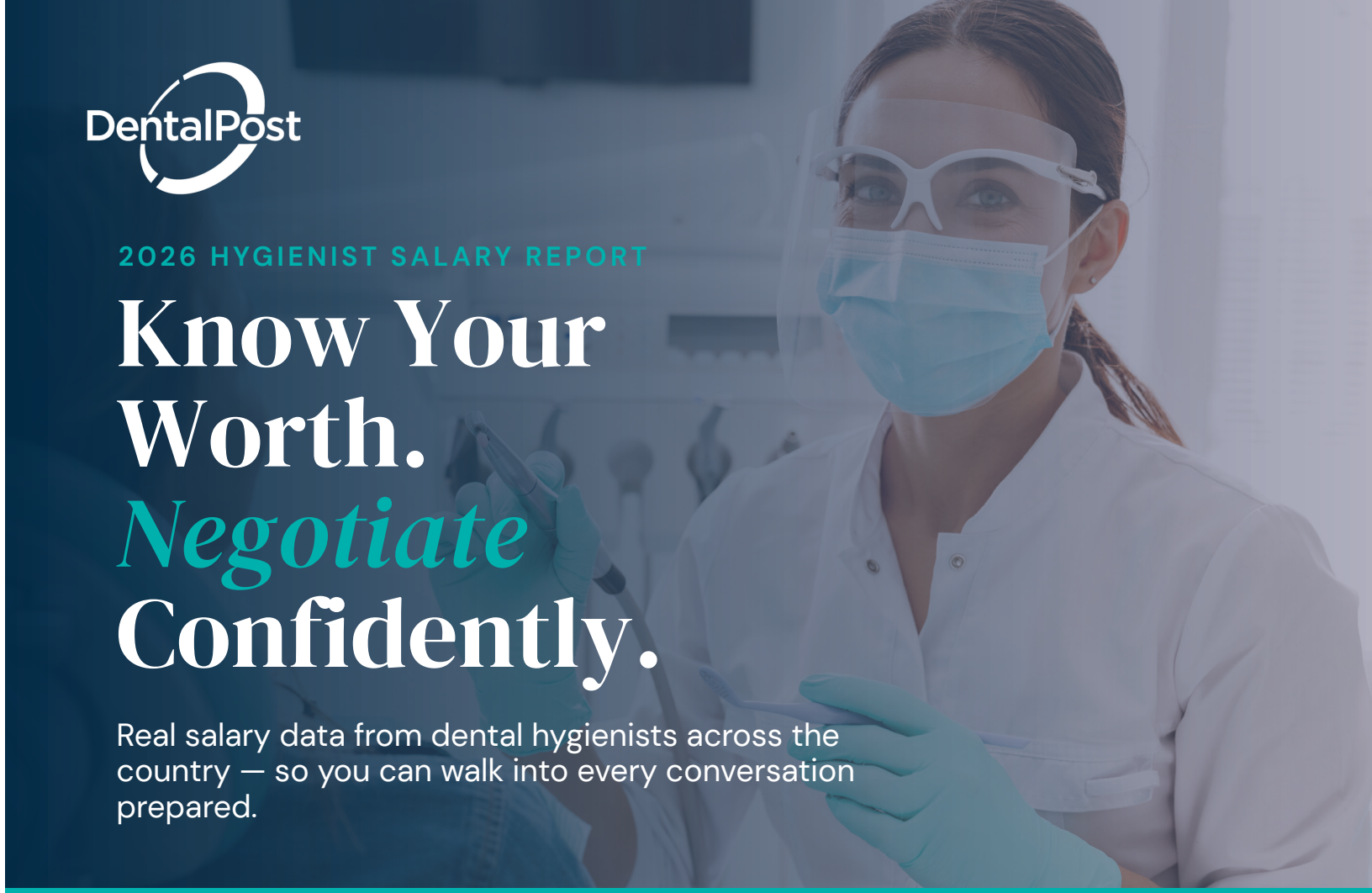
After graduating, I moved to San Francisco and became active in the San Francisco Dental Hygiene Society. Through this involvement, I was mentored by experienced hygienists, learned how our profession is shaped by legislation and regulation, and began to understand the importance of a strong, unified dental hygiene community in protecting patient care and professional autonomy. Today, I serve as Chair of the CDHA Foundation, a member of the Dental Hygiene Board of California, and as clinical dental hygiene faculty at the University of the Pacific. Each of these roles is a direct extension of my CDHA journey. The knowledge, relationships, and confidence I gained through CDHA gave me the foundation to step into leadership, advocacy, and education.

CDHA has not only shaped my career—it has shaped my understanding of what it means to be a professional committed to public health, lifelong learning, and service. From student member to statewide leadership, CDHA has provided me with the tools to give back to a profession that has given me so much. I am proud to be a lifelong member of an organization that continues to elevate dental hygiene and improve the oral health of Californians.

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CDHA Advocacy in the Past 30 Years

1994 CDHA joins the California Fluoridation Taskforce

1998 CDHA sponsors AB 560 creating the RDHAP license following years of CDHA advocacy and pilot projects opposed by CDA

2003 CDHA lobbies Regulation 1072 to remove restrictions on location of RDHAP programs

The first group of hygienists graduated from the West Los Angeles College RDHAP program

2006 CDHA sponsored AB 1334 (Salinas) clarifying RDHAP duties and allowing hiring of a dental assistant for limited procedures

2008 CDHA passed SB 853 (Perata) establishing the Dental Hygiene Committee of CA as an independent body focused solely on regulating the practice of dental hygiene - a first in the nation

2010 Western Regional Exam Boards (WREB) added to approved CA licensure clinical exams

2013 CDHA Task Force begins process that results in the CDT Code Full Mouth Debridement (Effective 2017)

2014 Central Regional Dental Testing Services, Inc. (CRDTS) added to approved CA licensure clinical exams

CDHA advances scope of practice for RDH/RDHAP placement of interim temporary restorations via telehealth supervision by passing AB 1174 (Bocanegra)

CDHA supports SB 850 (Block) creating a statewide Baccalaureate Degree Pilot Program for 15 community college districts

2016 CDHA sponsors AB 502 (Chau) allowing RDHAPs to incorporate

2018 CDHA sponsors AB 1482 (Low) establishing the Dental Hygiene Committee as its own autonomous board – the Dental Hygiene Board of CA – allowing RDHs and APs to determine the direction of their profession for years to come

CDHA and Assemblyman Nguyen create Periodontal Disease Awareness Month

2021 CDHA supports AB 927 (Medina) which makes permanent the Statewide Baccalaureate Degree opportunities for additional community colleges

2022 CDHA sponsors AB 2145 (Davies) clarifying that RDHAPs can provide in-service training in Skilled Nursing Facilities

2023 CDHA successfully lobbied to stop a bill (AB 481) that would allow unlicensed dental assistants to place sealants

2024 CDHA supports AB 2630 (Bonta) including transitional kindergarten in the Kindergarten Oral Health Assessment mandate

CDHA removes barriers to practice in Dental Health Professional Shortage Areas and further solidifies DHBC's independence from DBC by passing SB 1451 (Roth) – marking long sought wins for dental hygiene profession

CDHA opposes ADA resolutions to allow dental assistants to scale supra gingival and allow foreign trained dentists to work as hygienists

2025 CDHA joined the coalition to oppose the elimination of the Prop. 56 Medi-Cal Dental enhancements

CDHA strengthened its relationship with the Department of Health Care Services, which administers the Medical Dental program, to the benefit of hygienists and their patients. CDHA worked with DHCS, and continues to work with them, to resolve portal issues APs have experienced with the transition from Delta Dental to Gainwell

CDHA had discussions with Dental Therapy proponents regarding the regulation of dental hygiene practice and education programs in California

CDHA successfully opposed AB 873, an attempt to reduce infection control protections for dental assistants, which would impact the dental team. The bill was held in committee

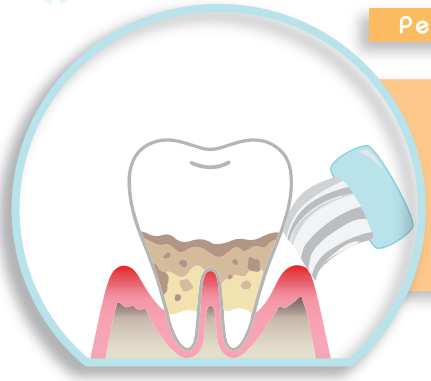
CDHA successfully supported SB 386, a bill sponsored by the CA Dental Association, to stop predatory dental insurance plan billing practices. The bill was signed into law

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9:00 am - 11:00 am PT

1.5 CE Units

Speaker: Pamela Graboso-Saul, MPH(c), MSDH, BSDH, RDH, FADHA

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1 CE Unit

Speaker: Gina Hanzel, RDH, BS

In-Person

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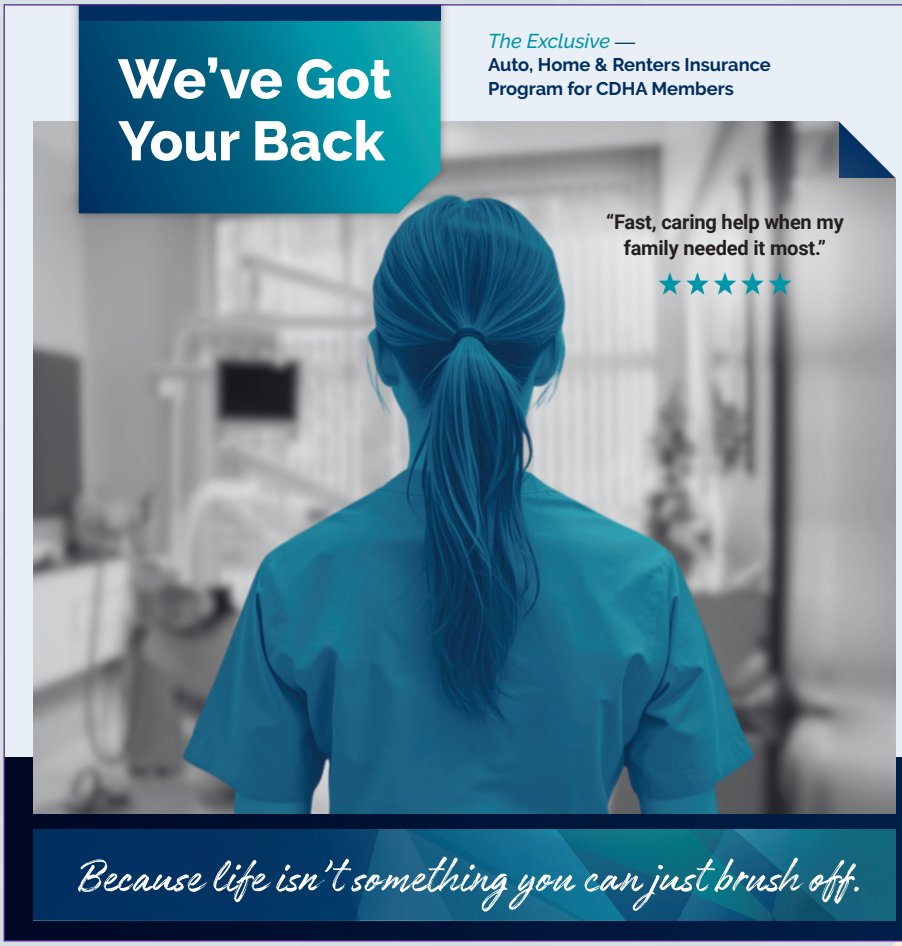
House of Delegates

Friday, November 6 thru Sunday, November 8

Holiday Inn • San Jose, CA

For CE courses in your area, consult the

CDHA calendar at CDHA.org



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