

# With a Common Voice

## Quality Assurance Programs

### THE LEGISLATION

*The Regulated Health Professions Act (1991) (RHPA): Chapter 18, Sections 80 – 83 outlines that all colleges must have a quality assurance program. The regulations regarding that program must be approved by the government and the program must include a professional development component, a practice assessment and a method for the college to monitor compliance. Among the RHPA colleges there are a variety of programs but all must be approved by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.*

*Program designs are based on the founding philosophy that the overwhelming majority of health care practitioners are competent and continually upgrade their skills and knowledge.*



## COLLEGE OF DENTAL HYGIENISTS OF ONTARIO

CDHO's Quality Assurance Program (QAP) is based on the registrant's self-evaluation against the CDHO's published standards of practice and a peer review of the registrant's portfolios. Dental hygienists:

1. develop goals related to their specific area of practice,
2. determine learning strategies to meet those goals,
3. implement those strategies, and
4. describe how the implementation affected their dental hygiene practice.

The Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) sets the criteria for selection and may randomly request that a specific number of registrants submit their professional portfolios in any given year.

Peer assessors review the portfolios and contact the registrant by telephone for clarification if necessary. If further clarification is required, an on-site practice review may occur.

CDHO suggests that the registrant notify the employer, if any, that the on-site review is to occur. The assessor tries to arrange a convenient time when s/he will randomly select charts of clients treated by the registrant. Copies, if possible, will be made. If copy facilities are unavailable, the assessor will provide a receipt for the originals, have them copied and return the originals to the office within a reasonable time. The registrant is responsible for the cost incurred in copying the records. In addition, the registrant's work environment is assessed as noted in the Practice Assessment Tool available in the QA section at [www.cdho.org](http://www.cdho.org).

The registrant is provided with the assessor's report and may choose to make a submission to the QAC who review both the assessor's report and the registrant's submission. The registrant is informed of the results and any follow up that is required.

The outcome of the quality assurance assessment is between the QAC and the registrant, respecting the confidentiality afforded in the RHPA.

CDHO has conducted surveys of registrants with respect to the QA process, the total quality improvement process and has conducted two major surveys of registrants to determine practice commonalities in Ontario. There may be additional surveys in the future.

## ROYAL COLLEGE OF DENTAL SURGEONS OF ONTARIO

RCDSO's Quality Assurance Program was designed to meet four key goals:

1. It is meaningful to dentists.
2. It is nurturing and non-punitive.
3. It does not involve office visits.
4. It encourages continuous learning and practice improvement.

The two major elements of the program are:

- Continuing Education – Each dentist is required to collect a total of 90 CE points over a three-year period. These 90 points are to come from three categories: core courses (15 pts), approved sponsored courses (45 pts), and other courses (30 pts).
- Self-Assessment – Every five years, each dentist will self-assess to evaluate and assess their practice, knowledge, skills and judgement in specific competency areas.

The Practice Enhancement Tool (PET) is a computer based self-assessment program that gives dentists an opportunity to evaluate and assess their practice, knowledge, skills and judgement based on peer-derived standards. Outside resources may be used to answer the questions based on core competencies. PET is accessible to all RCDSO members on the RCDSO website at [www.rcdso.org](http://www.rcdso.org). Over a five-year period, all RCDSO members will complete the assessment.

The multiple choice and case studies were developed in conjunction with the National Dental Examining Board (NDEB).

A Practice Enhancement Consultant, a dentist at RCDSO, is available to support dentists through this process. The consultant may assist members in interpreting the results of the self-assessment tool and locating professional development courses/activities.

Each RCDSO member will have secure access to his/her own e-Portfolio through the RCDSO website. This allows for personal tracking of educational activities and the monitoring of the 90-point requirement.

Members are to complete a section on the registration renewal form self-declaring compliance with the QA Program requirements.



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### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Q** *Does the College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario (CDHO) have the authority to perform an in-office audit in a dental office?*

The Regulated Health Professions Act (RHPA) 1991: Chapter 18, Sections 82(2)(3) gives the authority to the Quality Assurance Assessors to enter and inspect the premise(s) where the dental hygienist works and inspect the records relating to the dental hygienist's care of patients/clients. Both RCDSO and ODA confirm the obligation for the employer to cooperate with assessors.

**Q** *How do you know that the assessor has been authorized by the CDHO to undertake an in-office audit?*

Assessors are provided with a letter indicating that they have been appointed to conduct an on-site practice assessment of the dental hygienist under section 20 of Ontario Regulation 167/11 with the purpose being to gather sufficient information so that the Quality Assurance Committee can evaluate the dental hygienist's knowledge, skills, judgement and attitudes. This letter may be viewed by the practice owner upon request.

**Q** *Generally, how much time does it take to complete a CDHO in-office audit?*

On average, the audit of the work environment takes approximately an hour. The assessor will select approximately 20 charts of patients/clients for whom the registrant has provided treatment. As per the RHPA, the complete chart is required. The copying of client records takes 3 to 4 hours depending on the equipment available. Electronic records greatly reduce this time. Not having an in-house copier for use by the assessor prolongs the time required for the audit.

**Q** *Will the CDHO assessor ask or need to speak to the owner or other staff in the practice?*

There is generally no need for the assessor to speak with the owner or other staff in the practice. An assessor will let the dental hygienist know if an interview with a colleague will be needed and will make arrangements with them in advance of the visit.

**Q** *Are there limits on what the CDHO assessor is authorized to examine with respect to the office practice, equipment, policies and/or practices?*

Regulated Health Professions Act (RHPA) 1991: Chapter 18, Sections 82(1) gives the authority to the Quality Assurance Assessors to inspect any records relating to the dental hygienist's care of patients/clients.

**Q** *What happens to any records or reports that are duplicated/obtained during the in-office audit?*

The records and reports are retained, stored and destroyed by the regulatory college according to privacy legislation. The college is responsible for the security of the records when the assessor takes possession.

The CDHO's Quality Assurance Program has been in effect for many years. However, the RCDSO's formal program has just begun. Therefore, updates may be provided in future publications. Questions regarding the Quality Assurance Programs may be directed to either College at the links below.

[www.rcdso.org/quality\\_assurance/overview.html](http://www.rcdso.org/quality_assurance/overview.html)

[www.rcdso.org/contact\\_us.html](http://www.rcdso.org/contact_us.html)

[www.cdho.org/quality+assurance.asp](http://www.cdho.org/quality+assurance.asp)

[www.cdho.org/contact.asp](http://www.cdho.org/contact.asp)