



ORAL HEALTH IN LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES

Seniors in long-term facilities (LTC) face unique health challenges. Nothing has demonstrated this more than the experience over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Oral health is an essential component of overall health, and that's why the Canadian Dental Association (CDA) has long recommended that the following oral health standards be adopted by long-term care (LTC) facilities:

- An oral health assessment should be conducted by an appropriately trained and licensed health professional upon intake and annually thereafter;
- Beginning as soon as possible after admission, a referral process to a dentist for examination, diagnosis and treatment planning should take place;
- A daily oral health care plan should be implemented by appropriately trained staff;
- Facilities should contain suitable infrastructure to support the appropriate delivery of needed care by the oral health care team.

We are glad to see that the new, draft National Long-Term Care Standards released by Health Standards Organization contain references to oral health, including the importance of an oral health assessment on intake, and ensuring access to external dental care treatment providers.

We have recommended that these standards be further strengthened by adding standards relating to:

- Delivery of a daily preventative oral care plan by appropriately trained staff; and
- Ensuring facilities have the appropriate infrastructure, equipment, and tools to enable routine, basic dental treatment to be delivered on site.



CDA is a federation of Canada's provincial and territorial dental associations, representing over 21,000 practising dentists from coast to coast to coast.

The Canadian Dental Association (CDA) is the national voice for dentistry dedicated to the promotion of optimal oral health, an essential component of general health, and to the advancement and leadership of a unified profession.

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