

The North Dakota Dental Hygienists' Association advocates the creation of a midlevel dental hygiene provider who provides diagnostic, preventive, restorative and therapeutic services directly to the public.

A Midlevel Dental Hygiene Provider:

A *dental hygienist* who has graduated from an accredited *dental hygiene* program and has completed an advanced educational curriculum which prepares the *dental hygienist* to provide diagnostic, preventive, restorative and therapeutic services directly to the public.

Midlevel Dental Hygiene Provider:

1. Provision of clinical and diagnostic services in addition to those services permitted to an entry level *dental hygienist*, including services that require advanced clinical decision making, judgment and problem solving.
2. Completion of a clinical and academic educational program beyond the first professional degree required for entry level licensure which qualifies the *dental hygienist* to provide advanced practice services and includes preparation to practice in direct access settings and collaborative relationships.
3. Documentation of proficiency such as professional certification.

Dental Hygienists with advanced scope of practice are positioned to:

- Increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the dental workforce;
- Potentially reduce the cost of dental services by providing primary oral healthcare within the scope of advanced dental hygiene practice;
- Extend primary dental care to disadvantaged and remote populations outside of the traditional private practice setting;
- Expand the capacity of community-based health personnel and facilities to meet the oral care needs;
- Collaborate with dentists and other healthcare providers. This plan builds on the strengths of the existing dental workforce and emphasizes the belief that advanced education is essential for delivering quality and safe oral healthcare. Ultimately education, prevention, early diagnosis, early intervention, and daily communication among dentists and advanced dental hygiene practitioners could be the foundation for managing untreated dental disease and improving oral health for the entire United States population;
- The public will benefit from a practitioner who can provide both preventive and restorative services.