

College of Alberta
Dental Assistants

Standards of Practice

Approved by Council
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Standards of Practice

Introduction

The College of Alberta Dental Assistants (the College) developed Standards of Practice for the profession to fulfill the requirements of the *Health Professions Act* (2000) and *Dental Assistants Profession Regulation* AR 252/2005.

The *Health Professions Act* grants the College, as a self-regulating profession, the authority to set standards for the education, registration and competent practice of its regulated members, Registered Dental Assistants (RDA)¹ and Dental Assistants (DA)² with an obligation to protect and serve the public interest³.

Standards of practice are defined as direction regarding professional practice. Standards range from the broad profession-based standards established by the College to detailed care standards set by health agencies and specific education standards set by educational institutions. Standards are necessary to demonstrate to the public, government, and other stakeholders that the profession is dedicated to maintaining public trust and upholding the criteria of its professional practice.

Standards provide direction to practice, education, and research. The College Standards of Practice are part of the criteria for assessing the professional conduct of all regulated dental assistants in Alberta, regardless of role, specialty, or practice setting. The Standards of Practice apply to regulated members of the profession. These Standards of Practice are enforceable under the authority of the *Health Professions Act*⁴.

Process

The College Bylaws set out the requirements for revising the Standards of Practice⁵. The College Council assigned the task of reviewing and revising the Standards of Practice to the Governance and Nominations Committee (the Committee). The Committee endeavoured to develop Standards of Practice that are relevant, reasonable, attainable, measurable and enforceable.

The Committee was tasked with ensuring these Standards of Practice align with and complement the legislation, Dental Assistants Profession Regulation, College Bylaws, Code of Ethics, policies, practice statements and position statements relevant to the profession, enhancing the ability of the regulated members to provide quality care.

The Committee presented its recommendations to the Council who approved the proposed Standards of Practice pending stakeholder comment. The Standards of Practice were then circulated to stakeholders⁶ as required in the *Health Professions Act*⁷ and the College Bylaws⁸. Registered Dental Assistants and Dental Assistants were given 30 days to provide comments,

¹ Regulated members on the General Registry

² Regulated members on the Provisional Registry

³ Health Professions Act (2000), s. 3

⁴ Health Professions Act (2000), s. 3(1)(c)

⁵ College of Alberta Dental Assistants Bylaws, Section 9

⁶ Stakeholders include the Minister of Health, Alberta dental assistants, other colleges governed by the Health Professions Act, any other individual or organization Council deems appropriate

⁷ Health Professions Act (2000) s. 133(2)

⁸ College of Alberta Dental Assistants Bylaws, Section 9

as required by the Act and Bylaws. The comments of College members, stakeholders and the Minister were considered by the Council prior to final adoption of these revised Standards of Practice.

Practice Statement

In their practice, dental assistants do one or more of the following:

- a) provide supportive dental care services to maintain and promote oral health,
- b) provide education on and carry on research into those matters described in this section and manage regulated members who carry out those matters, and
- c) provide restricted activities authorized by the regulations⁹.

Guiding Principles

Mission

The College of Alberta Dental Assistants regulates its members in the public interest, promoting the delivery of safe, quality oral health care.

Vision

Alberta Dental Assistants are recognized leaders in regulation and governance, supporting research and practice that establish universally accepted standards of competence, professionalism, quality and safety for the profession.

Values

Dental Assistants take pride in the privilege of self-regulation, demonstrating professionalism through dedication to protecting the public interest and striving to meet the highest standards of care.

Dental Assistants abide by all applicable legislation governing practice, privacy, confidentiality and human rights.

Dental Assistants maintain and enhance their competence throughout their careers with self-assessment, life-long learning and collaborative practice.

Dental Assistants provide quality services, maintaining and improving patients' oral health without causing undue harm or risk.

Dental Assistants treat others with honesty, dignity and respect¹⁰.

⁹ Health Professions Act (2000) Schedule 4, s. 3

¹⁰ Adopted by Council February 7, 2015

Structure

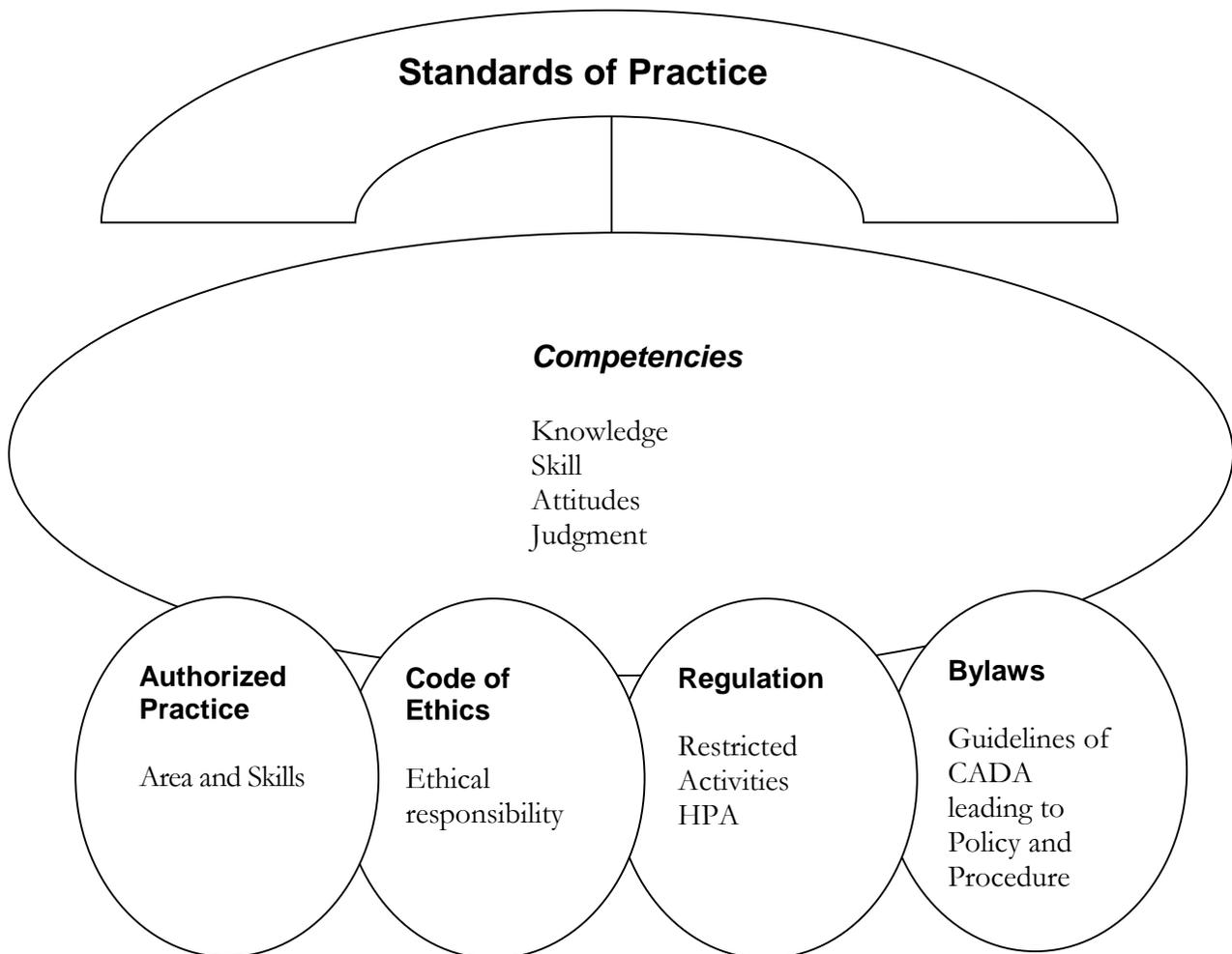
Standards of Practice are derived from six characteristics of a profession:

- accountability for own practice
- Code of Ethics¹¹
- specialized body of knowledge
- competent application of knowledge
- self-regulation
- service to the public

The College of Alberta Dental Assistants has four Standards:

1. Service to the Public
2. Accountability
3. Body of Knowledge
4. Application of Knowledge

In summary, the following illustration displays the relationship of professional standards to competencies, authorized practice, code of ethics, regulation, and bylaws, policy and procedure.



¹¹ Cross-reference CADA Code of Ethics

Definitions

For the purposes of this document:

Advocate	actively support a person, cause, idea or policy
Affiliate	in the <i>Health Information Act</i> , a person employed by a custodian (i.e. dentist, denturist, dental hygienist ¹²) who collects, discloses and uses information on behalf of and at the direction of the custodian
Authorized Practice	the parameters around the performance of services requiring authorization by the College
Care	provision of assistance or service; in health usually a service to meet needs of people
Competency	combined knowledge, skills, attitudes and judgments required to provide professional services
Dental Assistant	a regulated member of the College on the Provisional Register who may still be completing requirements for full registration, holds a provisional Practice Permit and requires supervision for all skills and services provided to patients
Indicator	description providing clarity, interpretation and where possible, measurement of the Standards statements
Registered Dental Assistant	a regulated member of the College on the General Register who has completed all requirements for registration, holds a Practice Permit and requires supervision for restricted activities
Self-Regulation	a privilege delegating to a profession the authority to govern its own members in accordance with a professional statute from the Legislature on behalf of the public
Standard	direction regarding the professional practice of dental assisting

¹² Health Information Regulation 49/2014, s. 2(2)(d), (f), (k)

Standard 1

Service to the Public

The Registered Dental Assistant and Dental Assistant use a patient-centered approach to provide safe, quality dental health care.

Indicators

The Registered Dental Assistant and Dental Assistant:

- 1.1 use education, experience and clinical judgment to assess, manage and apply information to provide quality and effective services to patients in the interest of public protection and as prescribed and directed by an authorized primary health care provider (i.e. dentist, denturist, dental hygienist)
- 1.2 communicate effectively and appropriately with patients, other health care professionals, health care or service providers, and appropriate other parties
- 1.3 maintain accurate patient records as directed or required and respect the confidentiality of information pertaining to patients in accordance with the *Health Information Act* and other privacy legislation as well as the custodian's policies and procedures
- 1.4 provide sufficient information to allow patients to make informed decisions regarding their oral health care treatment choices
- 1.5 use the tools and resources available to effectively meet the needs of patients
- 1.6 continually evaluate processes and outcomes to improve the standard of care for patients
- 1.7 advocate on behalf of patients to assist them in meeting their oral health care needs and resolving any related issues

Standard 2

Accountability

The Registered Dental Assistant and Dental Assistant are accountable and responsible for ensuring their practice meets the standards of the profession.

Indicators

The Registered Dental Assistant and Dental Assistant:

- 2.1 assume responsibility and accountability for their own actions and professional practice
- 2.2 comply with the Alberta Dental Association and College (ADA+C) Infection Prevention and Control Standards and Risk Management for Dentistry¹³ as approved by the College from time to time¹⁴
- 2.3 comply with occupational health and safety legislation¹⁵ and standards, collaborating with health care colleagues to facilitate and maintain a safe, healthy workplace and report any hazards/risks to the appropriate person and/or agency
- 2.4 annually and upon request, provide required documentation to the College to demonstrate compliance with legislation and regulation
- 2.5 comply with the continuing competence requirements of the College and meet requirements for renewal of registration
- 2.6 collaborate with the dental team to ensure safe quality care, practicing within the authorized practice and expectations as authorized by the College and legislation
- 2.7 recognize their own limitations and do not practice outside of their limitations and when necessary seek assistance, guidance and expertise of others
- 2.8 assume responsibility for their own practice and competence through self-assessment and lifelong learning to maintain knowledge, skills and judgment required to practice in their current setting¹⁶
- 2.9 know the restricted activities the profession is authorized to perform and limit their own activities to those they are both authorized and competent to perform and which are appropriate to their area of practice¹⁷
- 2.10 comply with legislation, professional standards and the custodian's policies and procedures for the collection, use, disclosure, and protection of health information¹⁸

¹³ Cross-reference ADA+C Infection Prevention and Control Standards and Risk Management for Dentistry

¹⁴ From time to time means that, although the College approved the ADA+C document as the standard to which dental assistants must adhere, the College retains the right to approve new, revised and/or additional IPC standards which would also be enforceable

¹⁵ Cross-reference Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act, Code and Regulation

¹⁶ Cross-reference The Competency Profile for Alberta Dental Assistants and the College CCP Policies

¹⁷ Cross-reference the Dental Assistants Profession Regulation (AR 252/2005), s. 12

¹⁸ Cross-reference Health Information Act (2000)

Standard 3

Body of Knowledge

The Registered Dental Assistant and Dental Assistant integrate theoretical knowledge of sciences, communications and interpersonal skills into the practice of dental assisting.

Indicators

The Registered Dental Assistant and Dental Assistant:

- 3.1 have acquired and maintain knowledge relevant to the role and responsibilities of the dental assisting profession
- 3.2 access and share appropriate information and resources with patients and other health professionals
- 3.3 promote ongoing development of knowledge of the discipline by engaging in education and research
- 3.4 mentor and support students, peers and members of the health team

Standard 4

Application of Knowledge

As a member of the dental health care team, the Registered Dental Assistant and Dental Assistant competently apply the body of knowledge to assess, treat and manage the care of the patient¹⁹.

Indicators

The Registered Dental Assistant and Dental Assistant:

4.1 work collaboratively with the dental health care team to competently:

4.1.1 identify patient needs through assessment of clinical observations, data, documentation and critical analysis of information

4.1.2 formulate goals and objectives, and select actions to provide care in collaboration with patients, and other health care professionals

4.1.3 implement, monitor and evaluate action plan through critical appraisal of process and outcomes

4.2 appropriately apply knowledge gained from experience, clinical judgment, and research findings to ensure competent professional practice

4.3 demonstrate communication, interaction and collaboration skills with peers, allied professionals and the public

¹⁹ Cross-reference the Competency Profile for Alberta Dental Assistants

Acknowledgements

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