

Dallas Dental
Hygienists' Association
Approved 9/12/19

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ARTICLE I NAME

The name of the corporation shall be defined in the Articles of Incorporation. The terms “Association” or “DDHA” shall be used in this document.

ARTICLE II PURPOSE AND MISSION

Section 1: Purpose

The purpose of DDHA shall be set forth in the Association’s Articles of Incorporation.

Section 2: Mission

The mission of the Dallas Dental Hygienists’ Association is to advance the dental hygiene profession, ensure access to quality oral health care and to represent and promote the interests of dental hygienists.

ARTICLE III SUPREMACY CLAUSE

DDHA is an incorporated component body of the Texas Dental Hygienists’ Association (TDHA) which is a constituent body of the American Dental Hygienists’ Association (ADHA). The Bylaws of this Association shall not be in conflict with the Bylaws of ADHA, which shall be the supreme law of the Association. A current copy of these Bylaws shall be on file with TDHA and ADHA. Changes adopted by the ADHA that are required to be in constituent bylaws may be incorporated into these bylaws without vote of the DDHA membership.

ARTICLE IV MEMBERS

Section 1: Categories of Membership

Individuals meeting membership qualifications in American Dental Hygienists’ Association automatically become members of DDHA and TDHA upon assignment or selection. The membership of the DDHA shall be composed of the following categories:

a. Voting Members

1. Professional Members. Professional membership may be granted to any individual who
 - a) has either earned a certificate or professional degree in dental hygiene granted pursuant to dental hygiene program offered by an accredited college or institution of higher education, or is licensed to practice dental hygiene in the United States under the provision of a “grandfather clause”;
 - b) is licensed to practice in any state, territory or possession of the United States if such license is required for the practice of dental hygiene; and
 - c) agrees to maintain membership in a Constituent as well as a Component (if such exist where the member is licensed, practices or resides).
2. Senior status. Professional members who have reached their full retirement age as set by the Social Security Administration and have either been an Active member of the Association for an aggregate total of thirty (30) years, or twenty-five (25) consecutive years may apply for Senior status.

3. Members with Disabilities. Professional members who are unable to work due to a verified disability may apply for Disabled status. All such applications must be verified by such member's Constituent and/or Component and must be accompanied by proof of eligibility each year.
4. Life Members. Any professional member who has made outstanding contributions to the dental hygiene profession and to the TDHA shall be eligible for Life membership upon nomination and election by the House of Delegates. Notwithstanding the foregoing, all TDHA Past Presidents completing a full term in office shall automatically be granted Life membership.

b. Non-voting Members

1. International Members. International membership may be granted to any individual who
 - a) resides outside of the United States; and
 - b) holds a valid license to practice as a dental hygienist.
2. Student Members. Student membership may be granted to any student
 - a) currently enrolled in an accredited dental hygiene program; or
 - b) who has graduated from an accredited dental hygiene program and is currently pursuing a baccalaureate or graduate degree complementary to a career in dental hygiene in an accredited college or institution of higher education.

Application shall be made through the Student Chapter of ADHA.
3. Supporting Members. Supporting membership may be granted to any licensed dental hygienist who
 - a) is not employed in a dental hygiene-related career; and
 - b) agrees to maintain membership in a Constituent as well as a Component (if such exist where the member is licensed or resides).
4. Honorary Members. Honorary membership may be granted by DDHA Board of Directors to any individual who
 - a) is not a dental hygienist;
 - b) has made outstanding contributions to dental hygiene or dental health; and
 - c) has been nominated by the Board of Directors.

Nominations shall be submitted by the Member Services Council to the Board of Directors, which may, by unanimous vote, recommend such election to the DDHA BOD. A three-fourths (3/4) vote of the DDHA BOD is required for election as Honorary Member. Honorary Members shall not be obligated to pay dues to DDHA.
5. Allied Members. Allied membership may be granted to any individual who supports the purposes and mission of the Association and who is not otherwise qualified for any other class of membership. Allied Members shall pay one-half (1/2) the active member dues.
6. Corporate Members. Corporate membership may be granted to any corporation, partnership, institution or organization that supports the Association's mission.

Section 2: Rights, Duties, and Privileges

- a. **Rights.** All members shall be entitled to attend the member meetings and social functions of the Association.
- b. **Duties.** Voting and supporting members shall be members of ADHA and TDHA.
- c. **Privileges.** Privileges of voting members:
 1. The right to vote on all matters requiring a vote by the membership.
 2. Eligibility for election as a Delegate or Alternate Delegate to the TDHA House of Delegates and eligibility for election or appointment to any office, council/committee, Board of Directors or similar position in TDHA, if otherwise qualified.
 3. Subscription to the TDHA publications.
 4. Eligibility for election as ADHA Delegate or Alternate Delegate and eligibility for election or appointment to any office, council/committee, Board of Trustees in ADHA, if otherwise qualified.
- d. Non-voting members shall have all rights and privileges of membership, except voting and holding office.

Section 3. Resignation

Membership in the Association may terminate by voluntary resignation or otherwise in accordance with these Bylaws. All rights, privileges, and interests of a member in the Association shall cease upon termination of membership for any reason. Any member may, by giving written notice of such intention, resign from membership.

Section 4. Reinstatement

Members who have resigned or whose membership has been terminated for non-payment of dues or assessments may be reinstated upon:

- a. payment of dues and any assessments;
- b. application to the ADHA; and
- c. meeting such additional terms and conditions as may be established by the ADHA Board of Directors.

ARTICLE V DUES AND ASSESSMENTS

Section 1. Determination

The amount of DDHA annual dues, fees, and assessments for all members of the Association, and the time for paying such dues and assessments, if any, shall be determined by the Membership. A two-thirds (2/3) vote shall be required for approval of any dues increase. Under special circumstances, the DDHA Board of Directors may waive or reduce the DDHA annual dues and or assessments for any member.

Section 2. Non-payment of Dues

The membership of any member who is in default of payment of dues or assessments for more than 45 days, ceases to be a member of the ADHA, or otherwise becomes ineligible for membership, shall be terminated automatically, according to such rules or procedures as the ADHA Board of Directors or their designee(s) shall establish, unless such termination is delayed by that Board of Directors.

ARTICLE VI OFFICERS

Section 1. Officers and Duties

The elected officers of the Association shall be a President, President-Elect, First Vice-President, Second Vice-President, Secretary, and a Treasurer, as described below. The duties of the Secretary or Treasurer may be assigned by the Board of Directors in whole or in part.

- a. **President.** The President shall be the principal officer of the Association and shall supervise the business affairs of the Association, subject to the direction and control of the Board of Directors. The President shall be an ex-officio member of all councils and committees, except as otherwise provided by these Bylaws. The President shall perform all duties customarily incident to the office of President and such other duties as may be prescribed by the Board of Directors. The President shall appoint a parliamentarian for the Board of Directors, who may be a member of DDHA, and shall either be credentialed as a Registered Parliamentarian (or higher) or have completed a parliamentary procedure course in the past 24 months. Compensation for the parliamentarian shall be subject to Board of Directors approval. The President shall succeed to the position of Immediate Past President upon expiration of the President's term of office.
- b. **President-elect.** The President-elect shall assist the President and shall substitute for the President when required. The President-elect shall be an ex-officio member of all councils and committees, except as otherwise provided by these Bylaws. The President-elect shall perform all duties customarily incident to the office of President-elect and such other duties as may be prescribed by the Board of Directors. The President-elect shall succeed to the office of President upon expiration of the President's term of office, and in the event of the death, resignation, removal, or incapacity of the President.
- c. **Vice-Presidents.** The Vice-Presidents shall each have such powers and discharge such duties as may be assigned by the Board of Directors or the President.
- d. **Secretary.** The Secretary shall serve as the recording officer of the Board of Directors and the Membership meetings and shall be the custodian of the DDHA records.
- e. **Treasurer.** The Treasurer shall have charge of and be responsible for the maintenance of adequate books of account for the Association; shall have charge and custody of all funds of the Association and be responsible for the receipt and disbursement thereof; and shall deposit all funds of the Association in such banks or other depositories as shall be selected in accordance with the provisions of these Bylaws.
- f. **Immediate Past President.** The Immediate Past President shall perform duties and carry out responsibilities as delegated by the President and the Board of Directors.
- g. **Additional Duties.** All officers shall perform such duties customarily and regularly pertaining to the offices they hold, and as otherwise permitted by these Bylaws, the DDHA Facilitation Documents, and the parliamentary authority.

Section 2. Qualifications

Any voting member in good standing shall be eligible for election:

- a. In order to be eligible for election as President-Elect, a member must serve a minimum of one (1) term on the Board of Directors of the Association

Section 3. Nominations

- a. Nominations for elected officers shall be made by a nominating committee, following verification of their qualifications for office by the nominating committee.
- b. Further nominations may be made from the floor subject to verification of qualifications by the nominating committee.
- c. No person may be nominated for elective office without their permission.

Section 4. Elections

- a. All elected officers shall be elected by a majority vote of the Membership. All elections shall be by ballot, which may be electronic.
- b. If there are more than two candidates for an office and no candidate receives a majority vote on the first ballot, a second ballot shall be taken on the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes on the first ballot, and no write-in votes shall be permitted on the second ballot.

Section 5. Term of Office

- a. Elected officers, exclusive of the Treasurer and President-Elect, shall serve a term of one (1) year or until their successors are elected.
- b. The President-Elect shall serve one year as President-Elect, one year as President and one year as Immediate Past President.
- c. The Treasurer shall serve a two (2) year term and be limited to two (2) consecutive terms or until their successor is elected.
- d. The term of office shall begin at the close of the May Membership Meeting.
- e. Officers serving more than half of a full term shall be deemed to have served a full term in office.

Section 6. Resignation or Removal of Officers

- a. Any officer may resign at any time by giving written notice to the President or Board of Directors. Such resignation shall take effect at the time specified or, if no time is specified, at the time of acceptance by the President. No vote of the Board shall be required.
- b. Any officer may be removed for cause by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the body which elected said officer or by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Board of Directors for violation of these Bylaws, the Code of Ethics of the profession, any lawful rule or practice duly adopted by DDHA, or any other conduct deemed by the Board of Directors to be prejudicial to the best interests of DDHA.
- c. Any officer who is suspended or expelled from membership or is determined to be ineligible shall be deemed to have automatically resigned from such office upon the date the ineligibility, suspension, or expulsion becomes effective.

Section 7. Vacancies

- a. A vacancy in the office of President shall be filled by the President-Elect, who shall serve as President for the unexpired term and for the full term immediately following.
- b. A vacancy in the office of President-Elect shall be filled by the Board of Directors.
- c. A simultaneous vacancy in the offices of President and President-Elect shall cause the First Vice-President to serve as President for the unexpired term.

- d. A vacancy in the office of First Vice President shall be filled by the Second Vice President.
- e. A vacancy in the office of Second Vice President, Secretary or Treasurer shall be filled by a successor elected by the Board of Directors.
- f. In the event of a vacancy in the position of Immediate Past President, the position shall remain vacant; the President may appoint individuals to fulfill roles assigned to that position.

ARTICLE VII BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 1. Authority and Responsibility

The Board of Directors shall be the administrative body of DDHA and is vested with full power to supervise and conduct all business of DDHA. The Board of Directors shall determine its business policies within the limits of these bylaws, shall actively promote its purposes, and shall have discretion in the disbursement of its funds. The Board of Directors shall act on behalf of the Membership. The Board of Directors may adopt such rules and regulations for the conduct of its business as shall be deemed advisable and may appoint such agents as it may consider necessary to fulfill its responsibilities. The Board of Directors shall provide reports to the Membership.

Section 2. Composition

The Board of Directors shall be composed of:

- a. President, President-Elect, First Vice-President, Second Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Immediate Past President, as elected by the Membership and,
- b. One trustee of TDHA (or their alternates as defined in Article XI Section 3.)
- c. And all committee chairs.
- d. No person shall have more than one vote, even should the person hold more than one office.

Section 5. Meetings

- a. **Regular Meetings.** The Board of Directors shall meet at least three times each year in regular meetings with the dates determined by the Board of Directors.
- b. **Special Meetings.** Special meetings of the Board may be called by the President or upon written request of any three members of the Board of Directors.
- c. **Open Meetings.** Meetings of the Board of Directors shall be open meetings to the membership and invited guests unless the information to be discussed is deemed to be of a confidential nature as determined by the President. Such meetings or portions of meetings may be conducted in closed session at the discretion of the President. The information related in these meetings shall be confidential to the extent determined by the President and information released to persons not so designated by the President shall be in violation of these Bylaws.
- d. **Meeting Virtually.**
 - 1. Authority. The Board of Directors, Councils and Committees may meet virtually, or may make provisions for individuals to join an existing meeting through the use of a conference telephone, electronic, or other communications equipment by means of which all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other and such participation shall constitute a member's presence at such meeting.

2. Notice. Notwithstanding anything set forth to the contrary in these Bylaws, notice of any meeting to be held by conference call or other electronic means shall be delivered to all members of the Board a minimum of forty-eight (48) hours prior to the meeting.

Section 6. Quorum

One-third (1/3) of the total voting membership of the Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Board.

Section 7. Ballots

In matters that require urgency and where a meeting is not critical to a decision, a vote may be conducted by electronic mail (email); however, should a negative vote be cast, the matter shall be considered “not adopted” and the question brought before a virtual, regular, or special meeting of the Board. All email votes shall be reported to the Board by the Secretary and recorded in the minutes of the next meeting of the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE VIII EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Section 1. Authority and Responsibility

The Executive Committee shall have emergency power to act for the BOD between BOD meetings and shall report to the BOD its actions. It shall not act apart from the BOD unless specified in the Bylaws or by the BOD.

Section 2. Composition

The Executive Committee shall be composed of the President, the President-Elect, the First Vice President, the Second Vice President, the Secretary, the Treasurer, and the Immediate Past President, should there be one.

Section 3. Meetings

The Executive Committee shall meet upon the call of the President, with majority consensus, or upon the request of three members. Virtual meetings of the Executive Committee as defined in Article VIII, Section 5.d, shall be permitted.

ARTICLE IX COMMITTEES

Section 1. Standing Committees

- a. **Standing Committees:** The standing committees of DDHA shall be: Audit, Budget and Finance, Bylaws, Communications, Community Outreach, Corporate Relations, DDHA Trustees, IOH, Membership, Nominating, Professional Development, Resolutions, Scholarship, Student Connections, TDHA Delegation, Tex HyPAC, Ways & Means, and Website Maintenance

Section 2. Special Committees

The President or the Board of Directors may establish such special committees as may be necessary in the operation of the DDHA and shall determine the membership and responsibilities for such committees.

Section 3. Authority/Responsibility

The authority and responsibilities for each Committee shall be as prescribed by the Board of Directors and as listed in DDHA's Facilitation Documents.

Section 4. Composition/Membership

- a. The action establishing a standing committee shall set forth the committee's purpose, authority, composition, and the qualifications required for membership on the committee.
- b. All Committees of DDHA, both standing and special, shall be comprised of not less than three members who are voting members of DDHA. The chairpersons and members of standing Committees shall be appointed by the President, unless otherwise provided herein, and approved by the Board of Directors. In the event that cooperative efforts with other groups make the appointment of one or more non-members desirable, such appointments shall be made only with the specific approval of the Board of Directors.
- c. The President and President-elect shall serve as ex-officio members of all Committees of DDHA, both standing and special, except for Nominations and tellers committees.
- d. At the discretion of the President, an elective officer may be appointed annually to each Committee of DDHA to advise and serve as liaison with the Board of Directors.

Section 5. Policies and Procedures

The Board of Directors shall develop and approve policies and procedures for the operation of all standing committees. All standing committees shall report to the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE X DELEGATES AND ALTERNATES TO TDHA

Section 1. Number

- a. DDHA shall be represented in the TDHA House of Delegates by at least one delegate. TDHA shall notify DDHA of the number of delegates to which DDHA is entitled. In the absence of a Delegate, an officially selected alternate may be seated.
- b. The number of alternate delegates elected may be up to one half of the total number of delegates determined by the TDHA Bylaws. The alternates receiving the highest number of votes will be members of the official DDHA delegation attending the TDHA Annual Conference. Funding for TDHA alternate delegates will be determined by the DDHA budget.

Section 2. Qualifications

- a. TDHA delegates and alternates shall be voting members in good standing.
- b. The President and President Elect shall automatically serve as delegates to TDHA.
- c. Candidates for delegates and alternates shall have a minimum of two years DDHA experience and service.
- d. The TDHA Trustee serves as the chair of the Delegation.

- e. Candidates for delegates and alternates shall acknowledge the duties and financial responsibilities of TDHA delegates and alternates prior to nomination and election.

Section 3. Nominations and Elections

- a. Nominations for TDHA delegates shall be made by a nominating committee, following verification of their qualifications by the nominating committee.
- b. Further nominations may be made from the floor subject to verification of qualifications by the nominating committee.
- c. No person may be nominated for TDHA delegate without their permission.
- d. TDHA delegates and alternates shall be elected by plurality vote of the DDHA Membership.

Section 4. Duties of TDHA Delegates and Alternate Delegates

TDHA delegates and alternate delegates shall perform such duties as described in the TDHA Delegation Committee Facilitation Document.

Section 5. Reporting

- a. The TDHA Trustee shall compile a written report in person at all quarterly TDHA meetings. The Trustee will also submit an annual report to the TDHA HOD packet. The annual report shall be given at the next TDHA Annual Conference.

Section 6. Resignation or Removal

- a. Any delegate or alternate may resign at any time by giving written notice to the President or Board of Directors. Such resignation shall take effect at the time specified or, if no time is specified, at the time of acceptance thereof as determined by the President.
- b. Any delegate or alternate may be removed for cause by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the body which elected said delegate or alternate or by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Board of Directors for violation of these Bylaws, the Code of Ethics of the profession, any lawful rule or practice duly adopted by DDHA, or any other conduct deemed by the Board of Directors to be prejudicial to the best interests of DDHA.
- c. Any delegate or alternate who is suspended or expelled from membership or is determined to be ineligible, shall be deemed to have automatically resigned from such delegation upon the date the ineligibility, suspension, or expulsion becomes effective.

Section 7. Vacancies

- a. In the event of a vacancy in delegates to TDHA Annual Conference, the alternate receiving the highest number of votes shall be first appointed to fill the vacancy; further vacancies shall be filled in order of number of votes received.
- b. In the event of a vacancy in alternate delegates to TDHA Annual Conference, the vacancy may be filled by the Executive Committee. A plurality shall elect.

ARTICLE XI GENERAL PROVISIONS

Section 1. Bonding

The President and Treasurer or anyone whom the Board of Directors shall deem necessary shall be bonded. The expense of bonding shall be provided by the budget of DDHA.

Section 2. Scholarships

DDHA may award scholarships annually to one or more dental hygiene students. Guidelines and recipients shall be approved by the Board of Directors. The Scholarship Fund shall be administered by the Treasurer under the supervision of the Board of Directors and all monies in such fund shall be used for the sole purpose of awarding scholarships.

Section 3. Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of DDHA shall be determined by the Board of Directors.

Section 4. Ethics

The professional conduct of each member of the Association shall be governed by the Code of Ethics of the ADHA.

Section 5. Use of Electronic Communication

Unless otherwise prohibited by law, any action to be taken or notice delivered under these Bylaws may be taken or transmitted by electronic mail or other electronic means; and any action or approval required to be written or in writing may be transmitted or received by electronic mail or other electronic means.

ARTICLE XII INDEMNIFICATION

The Association shall indemnify all past and present officers, trustees, directors, employees, committee, council, and task force members and all other volunteers of the Association to the full extent permitted by law. The Association shall be entitled to purchase insurance for such indemnification of officers and directors to the full extent as determined by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE XIII DISCIPLINARY ACTION/TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Grounds for Discipline

The Association may discipline a member for any of the following reasons:

- a. Failure to comply with these Bylaws, the ADHA's Code of Ethics for Dental Hygienists, or any other rules or regulations of the Association;
- b. Conviction of a felony or a crime related to, or arising out of, the practice of dental hygiene or involving moral turpitude;
- c. Suspension, revocation, or forfeiture by any state, province, or country of the member's right to practice as a dental hygienist; or
- d. Unprofessional conduct considered prejudicial to the best interests of, or inconsistent with, the purposes of the Association.

Section 2. Procedures

Discipline may include, but not be limited to, censure, suspension, probation, and expulsion. Disciplinary action may be taken provided that a statement of the charges shall have been sent by certified mail to the last recorded address of the member at least fifteen (15) days before final action is to be taken. This statement shall be accompanied by a notice of the time and place of the meeting at which the charges shall be considered, and the member shall have the opportunity to appear in person and/or to be represented by counsel and to present any defense to such charges before action is taken by the DDHA. Such disciplinary actions shall be conducted in accordance with procedures established by the DDHA Board of Directors. Suspension or expulsion can be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Board of Directors. All rights, privileges, and interests of a member in the Association shall cease upon termination of membership for any reason.

ARTICLE XIV PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

The rules contained in the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* shall govern the Association in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the Texas Act, these Bylaws and any special rules of order the Association may adopt.

ARTICLE XV AMENDMENTS

Section 1. Proposed Amendments

Proposed amendments to these Bylaws may be submitted to the Bylaws Committee or Board of Directors. These Bylaws may be adopted at any DDHA general membership meeting provided that;

- a. All amendments or corrections are supplied through the Bylaws Committee in writing.
- b. When previous notice is given thirty (30) days' prior to the DDHA monthly meeting of the membership, a two-thirds (2/3) vote in the affirmative is necessary for adoption.
- c. Proposed Bylaws not previously given thirty (30) days' notice may be introduced in any DDHA meeting with three-fourths (3/4) vote to consider this motion and three-fourths (3/4) vote to adopt.

Section 2. Notice

Notice of intent to amend these Bylaws shall be given at least thirty (30) and no more than sixty (60) days prior to DDHA monthly meeting at which such amendments are to be considered. Such notice shall include a general description of the proposed amendment. Notice shall be given by:

- a. Publishing it on DDHA website and
- b. Sending it to all members by mail or electronic communications.

Section 3. Effective Date

Any action relative to changes in these Bylaws shall become effective upon the date provided in the proposed change or if no date is set forth, the effective date shall be the date upon which the change is adopted.

ARTICLE XVI DISSOLUTION

In the event of the dissolution of the Association, the Board of Directors shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all of the liabilities of the Association, distribute all the remaining assets of the Association (except any assets held by the Association upon condition requiring return, transfer or other conveyance in the event of dissolution, which assets shall be returned, transferred or conveyed in accordance with such requirements) to the ADHA, or, if the ADHA is no longer in existence, exclusively for the purposes of the Association in such manner, or to such organization or organizations as shall at the time qualify as a tax-exempt organization or organizations recognized under Sections 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(6) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended or the corresponding provisions of any future United States Internal Revenue statute, as the Board of Directors shall determine. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by the court of general jurisdiction of the county in which the principal office of the Association is then located, exclusively for such purposes in such manner, or to such organization or organizations that are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes, as said court shall determine.

CODE OF ETHICS FOR DENTAL HYGIENISTS (ADHA Code of Ethics)

1. PREAMBLE

As dental hygienists, we are a community of professionals devoted to the prevention of disease and the promotion and improvement of the public's health. We are preventive oral health professionals who provide educational, clinical, and therapeutic services to the public. We strive to live meaningful, productive, satisfying lives that simultaneously serve us, our profession, our society, and the world. Our actions, behaviors, and attitudes are consistent with our commitment to public service. We endorse and incorporate the Code into our daily lives.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of a professional code of ethics is to achieve high levels of ethical consciousness, decision making, and practice by the members of the profession. Specific objectives of the Dental Hygiene Code of Ethics are:

- *to increase our professional and ethical consciousness and sense of ethical responsibility.
- *to lead us to recognize ethical issues and choices and to guide us in making more informed ethical decisions.
- *to establish a standard for professional judgment and conduct.
- *to provide a statement of ethical behavior the public can expect from us.

The Dental Hygiene Code of Ethics is meant to influence us throughout our careers. It stimulates our continuing study of ethical issues and challenges us to explore our ethical responsibilities. The Code establishes concise standards of behavior to guide the public's expectations of our profession and supports dental hygiene practice, laws, and regulations. By holding ourselves accountable to meeting the standards stated in the Code, we enhance the public's trust on which our professional privilege and status are founded.

3. KEY CONCEPTS

Our beliefs, principles, values, and ethics are concepts reflected in the Code. They are the essential elements of our comprehensive and definitive code of ethics, and are interrelated and mutually dependent.

4. BASIC BELIEFS

We recognize the importance of the following beliefs that guide our practice and provide context for our ethics:

- *The services we provide contribute to the health and well being of society.
- *Our education and licensure qualify us to serve the public by preventing and treating oral disease and helping individuals achieve and maintain optimal health.
- *Individuals have intrinsic worth, are responsible for their own health, and are entitled to make choices regarding their health.
- *Dental hygiene care is an essential component of overall health care and we function interdependently with other health care providers.
- *All people should have access to health care, including oral health care.
- *We are individually responsible for our actions and the quality of care we provide.

5. FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

These fundamental principles, universal concepts, and general laws of conduct provide the foundation for our ethics.

Universality

The principle of universality expects that, if one individual judges an action to be right or wrong in a given situation other people considering the same action in the same situation would make the same judgment.

Complementarity

The principle of complementarity recognizes the existence of an obligation to justice and basic human rights. In all relationships, it requires considering the values and perspective of others before making decisions or taking actions affecting them.

Ethics

Ethics are the general standards of right and wrong that guide behavior within society. As generally accepted actions, they can be judged by determining the extent to which they promote good and minimize harm. Ethics compel us to engage in health promotion/disease prevention activities.

Community

This principle expresses our concern for the bond between individuals, the community, and society in general. It leads us to preserve natural resources and inspires us to show concern for the global environment.

Responsibility

Responsibility is central to our ethics. We recognize that there are guidelines for making ethical choices and accept responsibility for knowing and applying them. We accept the consequences of our actions or the failure to act and are willing to make ethical choices and publicly affirm them.

6. CORE VALUES

We acknowledge these values as general guides for our choices and actions.

Individual Autonomy and Respect for Human Beings

People have the right to be treated with respect. They have the right to informed consent prior to treatment, and they have the right to full disclosure of all relevant information so that they can make informed choices about their care.

Confidentiality

We respect the confidentiality of client information and relationships as a demonstration of the value we place on individual autonomy. We acknowledge our obligation to justify any violation of a confidence.

Societal Trust

We value client trust and understand that public trust in our profession is based on our actions and behavior.

Nonmaleficence

We accept our fundamental obligation to provide services in a manner that protects all clients and minimizes harm to them and others involved in their treatment.

Beneficence

We have a primary role in promoting the wellbeing of individuals and the public by engaging in health promotion/disease prevention activities.

Justice and Fairness

We value justice and support the fair and equitable distribution of healthcare resources. We believe all people should have access to high-quality, affordable oral healthcare.

Veracity

We accept our obligation to tell the truth and expect that others will do the same. We value self-knowledge and seek truth and honesty in all relationships.

7. STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

We are obligated to practice our profession in a manner that supports our purpose, beliefs, and values in accordance with the fundamental principles that support our ethics. We acknowledge the following responsibilities:

To Ourselves as Individuals...

- *Avoid self-deception, and continually strive for knowledge and personal growth.
- *Establish and maintain a lifestyle that supports optimal health.
- *Create a safe work environment.
- *Assert our own interests in ways that are fair and equitable.
- *Seek the advice and counsel of others when challenged with ethical dilemmas.
- *Have realistic expectations of ourselves and recognize our limitations.

To Ourselves as Professionals...

- *Enhance professional competencies through continuous learning in order to practice according to high standards of care.
- *Support dental hygiene peer-review systems and quality-assurance measures.
- *Develop collaborative professional relationships and exchange knowledge to enhance our own lifelong professional development.

To Family and Friends...

- *Support the efforts of others to establish and maintain healthy lifestyles and respect the rights of friends and family.

To Clients...

- *Provide oral healthcare utilizing high levels of professional knowledge, judgment, and skill.
- *Maintain a work environment that minimizes the risk of harm.
- *Serve all clients without discrimination and avoid action toward any individual or group that may be interpreted as discriminatory.
- *Hold professional client relationships confidential.
- *Communicate with clients in a respectful manner.
- *Promote ethical behavior and high standards of care by all dental hygienists.
- *Serve as an advocate for the welfare of clients.
- *Provide clients with the information necessary to make informed decisions about their oral health and encourage their full participation in treatment decisions and goals.
- *Refer clients to other healthcare providers when their needs are beyond our ability or scope of practice.
- *Educate clients about high-quality oral healthcare.
- *Recognize that cultural beliefs influence client decisions

To Colleagues...

- *Conduct professional activities and programs, and develop relationships in ways that are honest, responsible, and appropriately open and candid.
- *Encourage a work environment that promotes individual professional growth and development.
- *Collaborate with others to create a work environment that minimizes risk to the personal health and safety of our colleagues.
- *Manage conflicts constructively.
- *Support the efforts of other dental hygienists to communicate the dental hygiene philosophy of preventive oral care.
- *Inform other healthcare professionals about the relationship between general and oral health.

- *Promote human relationships that are mutually beneficial, including those with other healthcare professionals.

To Employees and Employers...

- *Conduct professional activities and programs, and develop relationships in ways that are honest, responsible, open, and candid.
- *Manage conflicts constructively.
- *Support the right of our employees and employers to work in an environment that promotes wellness.
- *Respect the employment rights of our employers and employees.

To the Dental Hygiene Profession...

- *Participate in the development and advancement of our profession.
- *Avoid conflicts of interest and declare them when they occur.
- *Seek opportunities to increase public awareness and understanding of oral health practices.
- *Act in ways that bring credit to our profession while demonstrating appropriate respect for colleagues in other professions.
- *Contribute time, talent, and financial resources to support and promote our profession.
- *Promote a positive image for our profession.
- *Promote a framework for professional education that develops dental hygiene competencies to meet the oral and overall health needs of the public.

To the Community and Society...

- *Recognize and uphold the laws and regulations governing our profession.
- *Document and report inappropriate, inadequate, or substandard care and/or illegal activities by any healthcare provider, to the responsible authorities.
- *Use peer review as a mechanism for identifying inappropriate, inadequate, or substandard care and for modifying and improving the care provided by dental hygienists.
- *Comply with local, state, and federal statutes that promote public health and safety.
- *Develop support systems and quality-assurance programs in the workplace to assist dental hygienists in providing the appropriate standard of care.
- *Promote access to dental hygiene services for all, supporting justice and fairness in the distribution of healthcare resources.
- *Act consistently with the ethics of the global scientific community of which our profession is a part.
- *Create a healthful workplace ecosystem to support a healthy environment.
- *Recognize and uphold our obligation to provide pro bono service.

To Scientific Investigation...

We accept responsibility for conducting research according to the fundamental principles underlying our ethical beliefs in compliance with universal codes, governmental standards, and professional guidelines for the care and management of experimental subjects. We acknowledge our ethical obligations to the scientific community:

- *Conduct research that contributes knowledge that is valid and useful to our clients and society.
- *Use research methods that meet accepted scientific standards.
- *Use research resources appropriately.
- *Systematically review and justify research in progress to insure the most favorable benefit-to-risk ratio to research subjects.
- *Submit all proposals involving human subjects to an appropriate human subject review committee.

- *Secure appropriate institutional committee approval for the conduct of research involving animals.
- *Obtain informed consent from human subjects participating in research that is based on specifications published in Title 21 Code of Federal Regulations Part 46.
- *Respect the confidentiality and privacy of data.
- *Seek opportunities to advance dental hygiene knowledge through research by providing financial, human, and technical resources whenever possible.
- *Report research results in a timely manner.
- *Report research findings completely and honestly, drawing only those conclusions that are supported by the data presented.
- *Report the names of investigators fairly and accurately.
- *Interpret the research and the research of others accurately and objectively, drawing conclusions that are supported by the data presented and seeking clarity when uncertain.
- *Critically evaluate research methods and results before applying new theory and technology in practice.
- *Be knowledgeable concerning currently accepted preventive and therapeutic methods, products, and technology and their application to our practice.