

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**LOCAL RESIDENT ELECTED PRESIDENT,
ONTARIO DENTAL HYGIENISTS' ASSOCIATION**

Burlington, ON: Maheen Cassim of Thunder Bay has been elected President of the Ontario Dental Hygienists' Association (ODHA), a not-for-profit organization with close to 8,000 members. Her term of office is for one-year, effective May 24, 2019.

A registered dental hygienist for over 12 years, Maheen brings a wide range of clinical experience and knowledge to the position. Maheen started her career in dental hygiene upon completion of the program at Confederation College. After working in general practice for a year, Maheen opened her own independent dental hygiene clinic, *Natural Smiles – The Dental Hygiene Boutique*, in 2011. Maheen was initially elected to the ODHA Board of Directors in 2014 representing Region A – Northern Ontario. Maheen is active in her community and is always looking for ways to volunteer and give back.

During her term as president, Maheen is looking forward to working alongside the Board of Directors, a team of professionals whose main objective is to advance the profession of dental hygiene, educate the public about the importance of good oral health for overall health, and to advocate for access to oral health-care for all Ontarians.

As essential members of the health-care team, dental hygienists have a distinct role in the prevention of oral disease and in the promotion of oral health. This positions dental hygiene as an integral part of Ontario's primary health-care system.

Dental hygienists work in a variety of public and private health-care settings. With more than 250 independent dental hygiene clinics and mobile practices located across the province, the public has increased access to affordable dental hygiene services.

Those who benefit most are low-income families, the uninsured and those who are physically unable to get to a dental office such as the sick or the homebound, residents in long-term care homes and those living in remote areas.

Established in 1963, the ODHA advocates for the profession. Dental hygiene is one of the largest regulated health-care professions in the province. In Ontario, all dental hygienists are registered with the College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario, which regulates the profession to ensure the public receives safe and comprehensive oral health care.

Photo Caption: Maheen Cassim, 2019-2020 ODHA President