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**odha**  
Ontario Dental Hygienists' Association

**COVID-19  
Update**

## March 16, 2020 updates

### Update #1

In these uncertain times, ODHA understands the increasing concerns of member dental hygienists surrounding the COVID-19 global pandemic. We want to assure members that ODHA has put emergency plans in place and staff members are prepared to continue serving members throughout this pandemic without interruption.

ODHA has been providing ongoing e-mail broadcasts on the global coronavirus situation and through the dedicated [COVID-19 page](#) on the ODHA website since January 23, 2020.

The recent communications from the [RCDSO](#) and the [CDHO](#) are clear in the recommendations to oral health-care providers. The CDHO is strongly recommending independent dental hygienists suspend services immediately for public safety.

Dental hygiene services in a time of pandemic are not considered emergency or essential service. Some communities have not been able to secure a reasonable supply of personal protective equipment (PPE). These supplies are required to fully comply with the [CDHO infection prevention and control guidelines](#). ODHA strongly recommends all dental hygienists continue to follow these [IPAC guidelines](#) because the college will continue to enforce them.

We understand any suspension in work may impact your income. The federal government has already announced [employment insurance \(EI\) sickness benefits](#) providing up to 15 weeks of income replacement for individuals who are ill or must quarantine. The federal government has not announced any extension of EI benefits above that. ODHA is consulting with the association's legal counsel regarding access to EI benefits.

ODHA will continue to keep members updated through email broadcasts and current information posted to the ODHA website.

## **Update #2**

ODHA has been in contact with our employment legal counsel and we are providing the following information pertaining to employment insurance benefits for dental hygienists.

If your employer has closed your office and you are an employee you may apply for EI benefits. <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei.html>

The timing for the issuance of the record of employment (ROE) and your entitlements to EI benefits is governed by employment insurance legislation. See this link for more information. [https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/ei/ei-list/reports/roe-guide/understand.html#s1\\_7](https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/ei/ei-list/reports/roe-guide/understand.html#s1_7)

The ODHA is not in a position to give legal advice in relation to your individual circumstances. If you have any questions, contact your FREE member benefit Legal-Line. Get your free access code [here](#).

## **Update #3**

Today, the provincial government announced proposed [temporary amendments](#) to the *Employment Standards Act* to protect the jobs of not only those who are infected with COVID-19 or being quarantined, but also to those who need to step away from their job responsibilities to care for loved ones. This would be retroactive to January 25.

In a press conference this afternoon, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau stated the federal government will be announcing financial measures in the next few days that will assist those who are not eligible for employment insurance benefits (EI). We are hopeful that this financial aid will be available to dental hygienists when these new measures are announced.

ODHA understands many members are currently dealing with dental practices closing for an indefinite period of time. If you are a dental hygienist who was working in a dental practice, you may be eligible to apply for employment insurance benefits (EI).

ODHA has and will always be here to support our members. Since January 23, ODHA informed members in email broadcasts and provided open access COVID-19 updates and informative links on the ODHA website. This was all initiated before the first Canadian COVID-19 case was announced. Margaret Carter, ODHA Executive Director has participated in daily teleconference calls with Public Health Ontario and the Ministry of Health since early January and will continue to do so. ODHA has shared new information with members on the COVID-19 update page and will continue to do so moving forward.