



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Collaborative Dental Hygiene Practice Toolkit Resources Available to All**

October 30, 2023, Plymouth, MN – In honor of National Dental Hygiene Month, the Minnesota Oral Health Coalition, Normandale Community College, and the Minnesota Dental Hygienists' Association announce the establishment of a Collaborative Dental Hygiene Practice Toolkit on the Minnesota Oral Health Coalition website. The importance of the Toolkit is significant and far-reaching.

Low-income Minnesotans enrolled in Medical Assistance (Medicaid) and MinnesotaCare experience higher rates of dental disease and greater difficulty accessing dental services than Minnesotans with private insurance. One significant contributing factor is a dental professional workforce shortage, especially in rural Minnesota. Minnesota is a national leader in dental workforce development as the first state to establish Dental Therapy, a mid-level dental provider, as well as the promotion of Collaborative Dental Hygiene Practice.

In 2001, Minnesota passed legislation enabling licensed dental hygienists to deliver dental care outside of clinics and in community settings under a written agreement with a licensed dentist, without requiring a dentist to be present. In 2017, the Minnesota legislature updated its collaborative dental hygiene practice law which now also permits collaborative practice hygienists to perform their full scope of duties as permitted under general supervision. Bringing dental care to people, especially in community settings outside of the usual dental clinic, is key to expanding access. Collaborative Dental Hygiene Practice hygienists practice in schools, nursing homes, social service agencies and other partner locations.

The Collaborative Dental Hygiene Practice (CDHP) Toolkit originated at Normandale Community College as part of a 5-year U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration grant. Dr. Colleen Brickle, Dean of Health Sciences · Normandale Community College states, "The grant brought together 18 dedicated oral healthcare professionals committed to moving collaborative dental hygiene practice (CDHP) forward. These professionals met quarterly for five years on many initiatives. One of the products produced was the contents of this CDHP Toolkit".

Maintaining the availability of these valuable resources will empower those interested in collaborative practice. Three examples of many, resources found in the CDHP Toolkit include:

- \* Provides in-depth information on starting a collaborative practice, to include a collaborative agreement template.
- \* Describes one Minnesota dental hygienist's journey toward a successful collaboration with a dentist.
- \* Offers guidance on how to navigate the financial aspects of collaborative dental hygiene practice.

- more -

The Minnesota Oral Health Coalition is committed to the CDHP Toolkit and its evolution to support the CDHP delivery model. Efforts to increase health equity will require making prevention and education available to people beyond interactions within dental practices. Maintaining the availability of these valuable resources will empower those interested in collaborative practice. “As a statewide oral health organization comprised of people committed to optimal oral health for all, the Collaborative Dental Hygiene Practice Toolkit has found an ideal home on our website,” says Nancy Franke Wilson, Executive Director. The Toolkit may be found at

[www.minnesotaoralhealthcoalition.org](http://www.minnesotaoralhealthcoalition.org) or

<https://www.minnesotaoralhealthcoalition.org/collaborative-dental-hygiene-practice-tool-kit/>

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