



CANADIAN
DENTAL
ASSOCIATION

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DENTAIRE
CANADIENNE

2025

Canadian Dental Association Federal Election Policy Platform



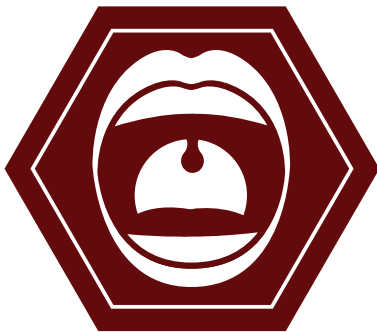


Invest in Oral Health Care

CDA urges federal political parties to commit to: sustainable, long-term federal investments in oral health care.

Federal investment in oral health care will improve access to care for millions of Canadians.

Federal Oral Health Care Investments Matter to Canadians:



Oral health is integral to general health and well-being.¹

76%







It's important that the next federal government continues to fund dental care.¹

71%

Funding dental care will impact their vote.¹



Consistent with CDA's 2023 policy roadmap, any federal dental care plan must:

-  Ensure that the cost of treatment is fully covered
-  Emphasize patient-centred, diagnostic and preventative care
-  Minimize administrative burdens
-  Ensure that it is sustainable for dental offices, considering their operating costs
-  Collaborate and ensure compliance with provincial and territorial authorities and regulations
-  Focus on oral health education with the public



Why Federal Funding for Oral Health Care Matters

1. Oral Health is Essential to Overall Health

- Increased dental care access reduces overall health complications and saves costs to the health care system.

2. Increasing Access to Care

- In 2023, more than one-third of Canadians reported not having any dental insurance.³

3. Reducing Barriers to Care

- 50% of Canadians age 12 or older with low household income and no access to any insurance avoid going to the dentist because they cannot afford it.⁴

4. Helping Vulnerable Canadians

- Federal funding helps eliminate financial barriers especially for older adults, children and people with disabilities.

5. Economic Burden

- An estimated 2.3 million school-days and 4.2 million working-days are lost annually due to dental visits or dental sick-days related to oral health disease.⁵



A well-funded and well-designed federal dental program is essential to:

- **improve access to oral health care services for uninsured Canadians**
- **reduce oral health diseases**
- **deliver better health outcomes**
- **protect access to dental care for Canadians covered by workplace or school benefits plans**



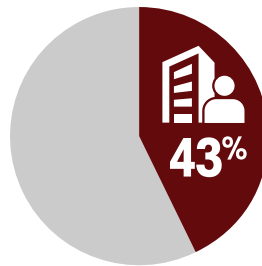


Protecting Employer-Sponsored Dental Coverage

CDA urges federal political parties to commit to: Implementing measures to protect the high-quality oral health care that two-thirds of Canadians already receive through their employer-sponsored plans.

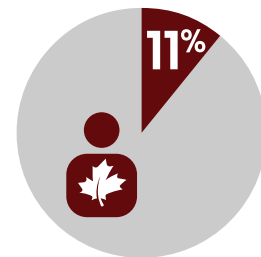
An unintended consequence of the Canadian Dental Care Program (CDCP) is the risk of employers dropping their dental coverage for Canadians.

1 in 4 employers are considering removing their private dental benefits coverage for those eligible for the CDCP.⁶



43% of employers say the CDCP will encourage them to reduce the dental coverage provided to employees.⁷

11% of Canadians say their employer has already reduced their dental insurance coverage because of the CDCP.⁸

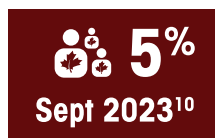


Half of Canadian workers are concerned about their employer-provided dental coverage being dropped because of the CDCP.⁹

Employers are increasingly considering changing dental care plans they offer.



Percentage of Canadians saying their employer has communicated about potential changes to their dental plan as a result of the CDCP:





The Case for Protecting Employer-Sponsored Dental Coverage

- The financial implications for taxpayers are substantial.
- Even a modest 10% drop in employer coverage could increase the CDCP’s cost by \$385 million in 2025, with costs potentially exceeding \$1.9 billion by 2025 if that rate reaches 50%.¹³
- If loss of employer-sponsored plans were to occur on a large scale, the number of eligible Canadians for the CDCP could increase from 9 million to 17 million.
- These increased costs could undermine the sustainability of any federal dental care plan and place an additional burden on taxpayers.
- Employers might also cancel plans for employees who are ineligible for the CDCP, leaving them without access.

Loss of employer-sponsored dental coverage and CDCP in 2025



Reduce 10%



Cost increase
~\$385 million

Reduce 50%



Costs potentially
exceeding ~\$1.9 billion

Termination
occurs on a
larger scale



Canadians eligible for
the CDCP can increase
from 9 to 17 million

DENTAL CARE BENEFITS

Recommendations to the federal government:

- 1. CDCP Eligibility Requirements:**
Make individuals ineligible if their employer provides dental coverage to any employees, regardless of income or company status.
- 2. Tax Incentives:**
Introduce tax incentives or legislative measures to encourage employers to retain dental benefits for employees who might otherwise become eligible for the federal dental care plan.





Oral Health Workforce

CDA urges federal political parties to commit to: Supporting the oral health care sector in addressing critical workforce shortages.

The ongoing shortage of dental assistants and dental hygienists is limiting the ability of dental professionals to operate at full capacity, leading to longer wait times, appointment cancellations and delayed treatments, especially in underserved areas.

Oral Health Workforce Challenges

1/3

of dental offices across Canada had vacant dental assistant positions in 2019.¹⁴



1 in 4

dental hygienists plan to leave the profession within the next 5 years.¹⁵



Canada will need additional dental assistants and dental hygienists in 2025 because of the CDCP.¹⁶

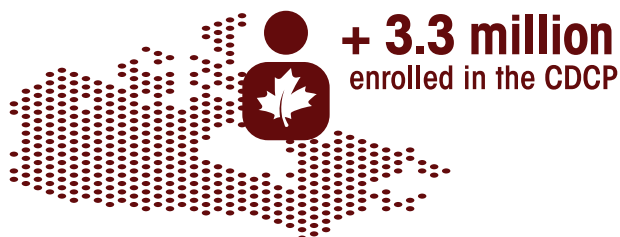
+2,300
Assistants

+1,500
Hygienists

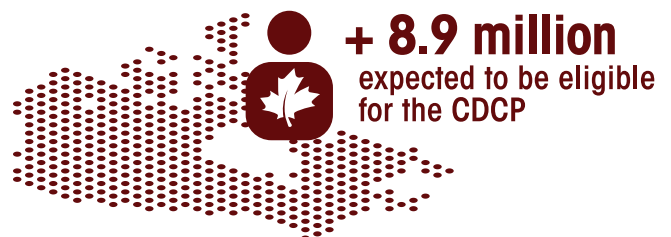
The Urgency of Addressing the Oral Health Workforce Challenges:

- As of February 2025, over 3.3 million Canadians were enrolled in the CDCP. This represents just 37% of the total population expected to become eligible in 2025.¹⁶
- Given current workforce shortages in oral health, it's crucial to ensure that the sector can meet rising patient demand because of the CDCP.

February 2025



End of 2025





The impact of oral health workforce challenges

- **Barrier in Access to Oral Health Care:** Fewer dental hygienists and dental assistants means longer wait times or reduced access to preventative care. Some people may have difficulty finding a provider.
- **Impact to Overall Health:** Untreated oral health conditions contribute to serious health issues like heart disease and diabetes, increasing the burden on publicly funded health care programs.
- **Rural and Remote Communities:** Workforce challenges are more acute in less resourced regions such as rural and remote communities, disproportionately affecting Canadians in these areas.
- **Unnecessary ER Visits:** When patients cannot access timely dental care in clinics, they often turn to hospital emergency rooms (ER) for dental pain and infections. CDA estimates that dental pain ER visits and hospital surgeries for early childhood caries cost \$138 million per year.¹⁷
- **Cost to the Economy:** Canadians missing work due to preventable dental issues results in thousands of hours of lost productivity, impacting businesses and the economy.

Recommended Actions for the Federal Government:

- **Partner with provincial and territorial governments to include oral health professionals in current and future federal, provincial, and territorial initiatives and discussions.**
- **Develop a Pan-Canadian Oral Health Workforce Strategy, focusing on the retention and recruitment of dental office staff.**
- **Help facilitate portability of licensures between provinces and territories for all oral health professionals.**
- **Encourage consistency in regulatory standards between jurisdictions to remove provincial barriers to licensure.**
- **Address the insufficient resources for dental student clinical training through increased funding.**
- **Support post-secondary funding for more dental hygiene programs.**
- **Make dental hygienist and dental assistant educational programs eligible for the Post-Graduate Work Permit.**
- **Ensure the inclusion of dentists and oral health providers as part of the Student Loan Forgiveness Program**
- **Provide funding for oral health workforce data collection**



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