

Bulletin



CDHBC Practice Standards and Documentation Requirements... Are you Hitting the Mark?

Why are the CDHBC Practice Standards and appropriate client chart documentation such important elements of ones' practice?

The Practice Standards indicate minimum standards of care that BC dental hygienists must meet in order to ensure the public receives safe and ethical dental hygiene care. They also serve as guidelines for best practice. The Practice Standards are built upon the familiar ADPIE process of care and also include standards to address safe practice, informed consent, and documentation requirements. In addition to guiding dental hygienists, the Practice Standards inform the public of the standard of care they can expect to receive, and demonstrate our accountability as professionals to clients, other healthcare professionals, and the government.

Documenting care provided in an accurate and appropriate manner is essential as a healthcare provider, and is one of the College's required Practice Standards. One of the current realities in our profession is that the number of practice related complaints received at the College has increased. This is not something that is unique to our College, as a number of other Colleges have noticed such trends as well. Clients are becoming increasingly savvy consumers of healthcare and have greater awareness of avenues to make complaints if they feel that an aspect of their care has been unethical, unprofessional, inappropriate and/or substandard.

In the context of complaints and cases considered by the Inquiry Committee, we've all heard the saying "If it's not documented, it can be assumed to not have occurred" and this well known notion still holds true. This is why familiarity with the Practice Standards and appropriate chart documentation are such important elements of one's practice: chart documentation potentially becomes a practitioner's best defense in the event of a complaint being made. Conversely if the documentation is substandard, it can be a dental hygienists worst enemy in the case of a complaint and can actually become the subject of a complaint.

As professionals, reviewing the Practice Standards and reflecting on our practice in the context of these standards is something that we should all do regularly in order to help ensure that we continue to provide clients with safe, quality dental hygiene care. In order to support dental hygienists with this, the College has developed a continuing education session on the practice standards and documentation which will be offered as a webinar in the future.

For examples regarding documentation in accordance with the Practice Standards, please visit the following link:

www.cdhbc.com/PDF-Files/QAP-Dental-Hygiene-Documentation.aspx