



Arizona

Dental Hygienists' Association

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Providing Access to Care is a Team Effort: Dentists, Physicians, and Affiliated Practice Dental Hygienists



Access to Oral Health Care is a Growing Problem

With a joint effort, dentists, physicians, and affiliated practice dental hygienists can bring oral health care to underserved populations giving those in need better access to care.

An Affiliated Practice Dental Hygienist (APDH) is an Arizona licensed health care professional who enters into an Affiliated Practice Agreement with an Arizona licensed dentist. APDHs can provide preventive and therapeutic oral health services, screenings, and referrals to dentists or physicians. APDHs are part of an oral health team whose goal is to connect underserved populations with health care services.

Patients Receive Care in Community Settings That Include

- Health care organizations or facilities
- Long-term care facilities
- Public health agencies or institutions
- Public or private schools
- Government-sponsored programs
- Private nonprofit or charitable organizations
- Social Service organizations or programs

An APDH can Provide the Following Services to Underserved Populations

(subject to terms of the written affiliated practice agreement)

Dental cleanings	Assess health of gums and teeth
Scaling and root planing (deep dental cleanings)	Review medical and dental history
Dental sealants	Document clinical findings
Topical fluoride	Health education
Dental x-rays	Blood pressure check
Screening of the oral cavity and surrounding structures	Referrals to dentists and/or physicians

Bridging the Gap with Teledentistry

Communication between dentists, doctors, and affiliated practice dental hygienists is easier now with the use of teledentistry. Teledentistry is the transmission of data through interactive audio, video, or data communications that occurs for the purpose of diagnosis, treatment planning, consultation, and directing the delivery of treatment, whether it is to a dentist, doctor, or APDH. With teledentistry, the dental and health communities can work together to deliver services to those in need.