



FACTS ABOUT PUBLIC HEALTH DENTAL HYGIENISTS (PHDH)

What is a PHDH?

A PHDH is an Illinois licensed dental hygienist who has two years of full-time or 4,000 hours of clinical experience and has completed the required 42 hours of continuing education (CE) credit courses required for PHDH certification.

[Additional information at IDHA](#)

What is Public Health Supervision?

Supervision of a PHDH by a licensed dentist who has a written public health supervision agreement:

- PHDH must work in an approved facility or program.
- Dental exam before treatment (TX) not required.
- Dentist not required to be present in the facility during treatment.
- May treat patients who are either:
 - eligible for Medicaid
 - uninsured and whose household income is not greater than 200% of the federal poverty level

Where Can PHDHs Practice?

- Federally qualified health center
- School-based clinic
- Federal, state, or local health department
- Head Start
- WIC

What Services can PHDHs Provide?

- Screenings and assessments
- Patient education
- Prophylaxis
- Radiographs
- Fluoride application
- Sealant placement
- Silver diamine fluoride (SDF)
- Intraoral photos – when intraoral camera is available.

RDH vs. PHDH?

Registered Dental Hygienist

- RDH licensure
- General supervision

Public Health Dental Hygienist

- RDH licensure and PHDH certificate
- PHDH supervision
 - Dental exam prior to TX not required
 - TX allowed without dentist in facility
- May not administer local anesthesia or nitrous oxide
- May not place, carve, or finish amalgam restorations or provide periodontal TX therapy

How Does the PHDH Benefit Your Practice?

The PHDH workforce model can have a positive impact on access to care. Allowing PHDHs to treat patients without a dentist first examining the patient can conceivably boost productivity. Permitting PHDHs to provide treatment without the dentist in the facility allows PHDHs the opportunity to provide dental hygiene services outside of the traditional clinic setting.

