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TO: ALL RCDSO MEMBERS

November 14, 2001

IMPORTANT NOTICE ABOUT THE TAKING OF IMPRESSIONS

- The College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario (CDHO) distributed a Practice Alert to its membership in October about its interpretation of standards regarding the taking of impressions in the dental office. The CDHO Alert is on the reverse side of this bulletin.
- Unfortunately the information in the Alert has misinterpreted this College's position.
- RCDSO's position is clearly outlined in a letter of October 24 to the province's Minister of Health and Long-Term Care Tony Clement. A copy of the letter was also sent to CDHO. The following is a quote from that letter:

...it has always been our view that ultimately the dentist is responsible for all acts that occur in his/her office, be they regulated or otherwise.

As to the specific issue of mouthguards and bleaching trays, the issue is not the mechanical exercise. It is really a complete assessment and diagnosis of the patient's condition which would generate the treatment plan. It is important to remember that it is a dentist who is responsible to the patient for the outcome of treatment and therefore the dentist must have supervisory control of the impression and must make the final determination of its acceptability.

Having said that, there is certainly nothing wrong with the hygienist actually taking the impression

- The College interprets the intra-oral procedure of taking impressions for study models to include taking impressions for the purpose of construction of custom trays, bleaching trays and sports mouthguards.
- These procedures may be assigned to dental hygienists and Level II dental assistants provided that:
 - a. A dentist authorizes the procedure.
 - b. A dentist ensures that the impression/model is suitable for its intended use.

Note 1: In the case of Level II dental assistants, the authorizing dentist must be present in the office suite when the procedures are carried out.

Note 2: Although a dentist's presence is not required when these procedures are carried out by a dental hygienist, it is important to note that point a and point b listed above still apply.

(PLEASE SHARE THIS NOTICE WITH ALL THE DENTAL HYGIENISTS IN YOUR DENTAL OFFICE.)

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College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario

PRACTICE ALERT

October 2001

Notice to Dental Hygienists in Ontario:

The College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario (CDHO) has been informed by the Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario (RCDSO) that the RCDSO is enforcing the terms of their proposed document: *Revised Standards of Practice of the Profession Relating to the Performance of Intra-Oral Procedures by Third Parties*. These standards were passed by the RCDSO Council November 13-14, 2000. A memorandum, dated January 31, 2000 was sent to all Ontario Dentists by the RCDSO Registrar stating that "these standards will not come into effect until the appropriate regulations receive government approval." However, the RCDSO has confirmed with the CDHO that they are advising its members that they must comply with these revised standards despite the fact that government has not been granted.

Please note that the RCDSO says that the following statements apply to procedures that occur in the dentist's office:

- Only the **dentist** may take impressions for the fabrication of a mouthguard for sports purposes;
- Only the **dentist** may take impressions for the fabrication of a tray for whitening procedures;
- A dental hygienist may take preliminary impressions of the teeth for study models
- A dental hygienist may take impressions for working models for the fabrication of appliances for orthodontic or space maintenance functions.

As stated in the Spring 2000 edition of *Milestones*, the taking of impressions is not a controlled act, and the CDHO does not support these restrictions imposed by the RCDSO. Dental hygienists may continue to provide these services external to the dentist's office following the CDHO Standards of Practice. As far as CDHO is concerned, dental hygienists are permitted to provide these services in a dental office but, given the RCDSO position, this should be discussed with the dentist first.

In the course of the dialogue with the RCDSO regarding the issue of impression taking, the CDHO was also informed the **RCDSO expects that the dentist perform a clinical examination prior to the prescribing of radiographs**. Again, this position is unwarranted in the view of the CDHO. However, dentists may be altering the usual practice in dental offices and advising that the dental hygienist must not take radiographs prior to the clinical examination by the dentist unless the radiographs were prescribed at a previous visit when the clinical examination was performed by the dentist.

Ontario dental hygienists are encouraged to discuss these issues with the dentists with whom they practice.