COMPETENCIES FOR THE ENTRY-LEVEL DENTAL HYGIENIST

Competence: That level of skills, knowledge, and values required by new graduates to begin the practice of dental hygiene.

CORE COMPETENCIES (C): Reflect the ethics, values, skills, and knowledge, integral to all aspects of dental hygiene practice.

The graduate will be able to:

C1. Ethics: Discern and manage ethical issues of dental hygiene practice in a rapidly changing environment and apply a professional code of ethics in all endeavors.
   1.1 Apply principles of ethical behavior in decision-making, interactions with patients and staff, and personal conduct.
   1.2 Apply the ADHA Code of Ethics in the practice of dental hygiene.

C2. Jurisprudence: Adhere to state and federal laws, recommendations, and regulations in the provision of oral health care.
   2.1 Apply the provisions of the Oklahoma State Dental Practice Act

C3. Critical Thinking: Use critical thinking skills and comprehensive problem-solving to identify oral health care strategies that promote patient health and wellness.
   3.1 Locate, critically evaluate, and integrate written and electronic sources of scientific information to improve the oral health of the patient.

C4. Evidence-based Decision-Making: Use evidence-based decision making to evaluate emerging technology and treatment modalities to integrate into patient dental hygiene care plans to achieve high-quality, cost-effective care.
   4.1 Evaluate the safety and efficacy of new diagnostic and treatment modalities and make appropriate decisions regarding the use of new procedures on patients.
   4.2 Evaluate and select products for patient care based upon scientific evidence.
C5. **Professional Responsibility:** Assume responsibility for dental hygiene actions and care based on accepted scientific theories, research, and the accepted standard of care.
   5.1 Provide quality dental hygiene services to the public based on current theory and research

C6. **Self-Assessment:** Continuously perform self-assessment for life-long learning and professional growth.
   6.1 Evaluate clinical, didactic, and practicum performance and identify factors that would result in an improved outcome.

C7. **Theory Integration:** Integrate accepted scientific theories and research into educational, preventive, and therapeutic oral health services.

C8 **Professionalism:** Promote the values of the dental hygiene profession through service-based activities, positive community affiliations, and active involvement in local organizations.

C9. **Quality Assurance:** Apply quality assurance mechanisms to ensure continuous commitment to accepted standards of care.
   9.1 Utilize appropriate standard precautions in preventing transmission of infectious diseases.
   9.2 Understand the role of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and Environment Protection Agency (EPA) in regulating dental practices.
   9.3 Implement and evaluate measures to minimize occupational hazards.
   9.4 Expose radiographs based on patient need in compliance with current accepted professional guidelines.

C10. **Communication:** Communicate effectively with diverse individuals and groups, serving all persons without discrimination by acknowledging and appreciating diversity.
    10.1 Evaluate factors that can be used to promote patient adherence to disease prevention and encourage patients to assume responsibility for health and wellness.

C11. **Documentation:** Record accurate, consistent, and complete documentation of oral health services provided.
    11.1 Recognize the patient record as a legal document and maintain its accuracy and consistency prior to or during dental hygiene treatment.
    11.2 Maintain confidentiality of patient health information by compliance with HIPAA regulations.

C12. **Individualize Care:** Initiate a collaborative approach with all patients when developing individualized care plans that are specialized, comprehensive, culturally sensitive, and acceptable to all parties involved in care planning.
C.13 **Professional Collaboration**: Initiate consultations and collaborations with all relevant health care providers to facilitate optimal treatments.

C.14 **Medical Emergencies**: Manage medical emergencies by using professional judgment, providing life support, and utilizing required CPR and any specialized training or knowledge.

**HEALTH PROMOTION AND DISEASE PREVENTION (HP):** General knowledge of wellness, health determinants, and characteristics of various patient communities.

The graduate will be able to:

**HP.1.** Promote the values of oral and general health and wellness to the public and organizations inside and outside the profession.

**HP.2** Respect the goals, values, beliefs, and preferences of all patients.

**HP.3** Refer patients who may have physiological, psychological, or social problems for comprehensive evaluation.

**HP.4** Identify individual and population risk factors, and develop strategies that promote health-related quality of life.

**HP.5** Evaluate factors that can be used to promote patient adherence to disease prevention or health maintenance strategies.

**HP.6** Utilize methods that ensure the health and safety of the patient and the oral health professional in the delivery of care.

**COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (CM): Local, state and national roles of dental hygiene graduates.**

The graduate will be able to:

**CM.1** Assess the oral health needs and services of the community to determine action plans and availability of resources to meet health care needs.

**CM.2** Provide screening, referral, and educational services that allow patients to access the resources of the health care system.

**CM.3** Provide community oral health services in a variety of settings.

**CM.4** Facilitate patient access to oral health services by influencing individuals or organizations for the provision of oral health care.

**CM.5** Evaluate reimbursement mechanisms and their impact on patient access to oral health care.
CM.6 Evaluate the outcomes of community-based programs, and plan for future activities.

CM.7 Advocate for effective oral health care for underserved populations.

PATIENT CARE (PC) A defined process of care in provision of patient care services and treatment modalities.

The graduate will be able to:

**Assessment**

**PC.1:** Systematically collect, analyze, and record diagnostic data on the general, oral, and psychosocial health status of a variety of patients using methods consistent with medico-legal principles.

**PC.2** Recognize predisposing and etiologic risk factors that require intervention to prevent disease.

**PC.3** Recognize the relationships among systemic disease, medications, and oral health that impact overall patient care and treatment outcomes.

**PC.4** Identify patients at risk for a medical emergency, and manage the patient care in a manner that prevents an emergency.

**Dental Hygiene Diagnosis:**

**PC.5** Use patient assessment data, diagnostic technologies, and critical decision making skills to determine a dental hygiene diagnosis, a component of the dental diagnosis, to reach conclusions about the patient’s dental hygiene care needs.

**Planning:**

**PC.6** Utilize reflective judgment in developing a comprehensive patient dental hygiene care plan.

**PC.7** Collaborate with the patient and other health professionals as indicated to formulate a comprehensive dental hygiene care plan that is patient-centered and based on the best scientific evidence and professional judgment.

**PC.8** Make referrals to professional colleagues and other health care professionals as indicated in the patient care plan.
PC.9 Obtain the patient’s informed consent based on a thorough case presentation.

**Implementation:**

PC.10 Provide specialized treatment that includes educational, preventive, and therapeutic services designed to achieve and maintain oral health. 
10.1 Partner with the patient in achieving oral health goals.

**Evaluation:**

PC.11 Evaluate the effectiveness of the provided services, and modify care plans as needed.

PC.12 Determine the outcomes of dental hygiene interventions using indices, instruments, examination techniques, and patient self-reports as specified in patient goals.

PC.13 Compare actual outcomes to expected outcomes, reevaluating goals, diagnoses, and services when expected outcomes are not achieved. 
13.1 Evaluate patient satisfaction with the oral health care received and the oral health status achieved.

**PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT (PGD): Communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills required to positively influence the dental hygiene profession and increase patients’ access to the oral health care system.**

The graduate will be able to:

**PGD1.** Pursue career opportunities within health care, industry, education, research, and other roles as they evolve for the dental hygienist.
1.1. Describe the six roles of the dental hygienist as defined by the American Dental Hygienists’ Association.

**PGD.2** Develop practice management and marketing strategies to be used in the delivery of oral health care.
2.1. Implement and gauge the effectiveness of a re-care system.
2.2. Develop skills to enhance teamwork and efficiency in the dental office.
2.3. Effectively manage business aspects of dental hygiene practice.

**PGD.3** Access professional and social networks to pursue professional goals.
3.1 Identify the importance of professional organizations through participation in student professional organizations.
3.2 Develop mechanisms for professional networking.

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