

Resolution No. [Resolution Number] [Type]

Report: [Report] Date Submitted: [Date Submitted]

Submitted By: [Submitted By]

Reference Committee: [Reference Committee for Worksheet]

Total Net Financial Implication: [Total Net Financial Impl.] Net Dues Impact:

Amount One-time Amount On-going

1 **EXPLORING ALTERNATIVE ACCREDITATION STANDARDS FOR DENTAL HYGIENE AND DENTAL**
 2 **ASSISTING TO ADDRESS SIGNIFICANT WORKFORCE SHORTAGES**

3 **Background:** Over the last three years, several state dental associations have advocated for changes to
 4 accreditation standards for dental hygiene and dental assisting training programs. Unfortunately, the
 5 Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) has opposed these efforts, including but not limited to
 6 modification of existing faculty-to-student ratios, that would increase capacity at existing and new allied
 7 health training programs across the nation.

8 CODA has perpetuated inconsistent faculty-to-student ratios across its standards: dental hygiene
 9 programs must have one instructor for every five students for clinical education, dental therapy and dental
 10 assisting programs can operate with one instructor per six students, and there is no required ratio for
 11 predoctoral dental education. The effect of this arbitrary, inconsistent approach is that CODA is
 12 promulgating standards where students trained to perform the least invasive procedures have the most
 13 restrictive faculty-to-student ratios.

14 CODA's accreditation standards have also resulted in a precipitous decline in accredited dental assisting
 15 programs. Many programs are opting to continue as unaccredited programs in lieu of maintaining CODA's
 16 burdensome accreditation standards.

17 The United States is experiencing a dire shortage of dental hygienists and dental assistants. Nationally,
 18 we are graduating less than half of the dental hygienists and less than 10 percent of dental assistants
 19 from accredited programs that are needed to fill annual job openings according to the Bureau of Labor
 20 Statistics.

Profession	BLS Annual Job Openings (2021-2031)	Number of Graduates from Accredited Programs (2019)	Percentage of Annual Graduates from Accredited Programs to Annual Openings ⁱ
General Dentistry*	5,100 ⁱⁱ	6,350 ⁱⁱⁱ	125.0%
Dental Hygiene	16,300 ^{iv}	7,311 ^v	44.9%
Dental Assisting	56,400 ^{vi}	4,688 ^{vii}	8.3%

21 ⁱ The percentage of annual graduates from accredited programs to annual openings was calculated by
 22 dividing the number of graduates from accredited programs by BLS annual job openings.
 23 ⁱⁱ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statists- Dentists. Retrieved 4.17.2023.
 24 <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dentists.htm>
 25 ⁱⁱⁱ American Dental Education Association – Trends in Dental Education 2020-2021. Retrieved 4.17.23.
 26 <https://www.adea.org/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=43750>
 27 ^{iv} U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics- Dental Hygienists. Retrieved 4.17.2023.

1 <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dental-hygienists.htm>
2 ^v American Dental Education Association – Trends in Dental Education 2020-2021. Retrieved 4.17.23.
3 <https://www.adea.org/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=43750>
4 ^{vi} U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics- Dental Assistants. Retrieved 4.17.2023.
5 <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dental-assistants.htm>
6 ^{vii} American Dental Education Association – Trends in Dental Education 2020-2021. Retrieved 4.17.23.
7 <https://www.adea.org/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=43750>

8 CODA has continued to oppose common sense changes sought by many state dental associations. In
9 August 2024, CODA argued that the most restrictive faculty-to-student ratios for dental hygiene should be
10 maintained since most dental hygiene students are in “the ‘emerging adulthood’ stage of development”. It
11 is unclear if other students in other accredited professions are impacted by this undefined stage of
12 development; if these students are impacted, it appears CODA does not believe the accreditation
13 standards of other professions need to be revised to address this purportedly significant issue in dental
14 hygiene.

15 CODA must be fundamentally disrupted or organizations that want to address the significant shortages of
16 dental hygienists and assistants must look elsewhere for collaborative partnership.

17 **Resolution**

18 **Resolved**, that the appropriate agency partner with interested state dental associations to identify other
19 accrediting bodies, recognized by the United States Department of Education, that would be interested in
20 developing accreditation standards for dental hygiene and dental assisting that could be recognized as
21 alternative standards to those promulgated by CODA.

22 **Resolved**, that the appropriate agency report back to the 2025 House of Delegates.
