

Tooth - Bytes



Wisconsin Dental Hygienists' Association

December 2009

This is an exciting time for the dental hygiene profession. We're making real progress towards our strategic goals on both the national and state level and as a result providing a true value for our members.

The new mid-level provider in Minnesota and an expansion of direct access to a dental hygienist in several other states are only two examples of how our association improves the working lives of dental hygienists every day.



Others in our state, however, might question our success. Recently an item in the Wisconsin Dental Association Journal called into question the value of WDHA and ADHA membership and to support their position used quotes taken out of context from ADHA staff and national leaders made during the 2009 House of Delegates meeting. The article went on to state that WDA has established a task force to explore the potential of creating a "professional home" for dental hygienists under the WDA umbrella.

My response to WDA is thanks but no thanks!

In Wisconsin I am happy to report that our membership numbers are on the rise. I believe this is because dental hygienists do value membership in our professional association and realize that the ADHA/WDHA is the ONLY association in Wisconsin committed exclusively to supporting and advancing the profession of dental hygiene. Those of us who have been practicing long enough remember a time when dental hygienists were only allowed to work under direct supervision in a dental office, were not able to: place sealants, administer local anesthetic, place sub-gingival medicaments, provide dental hygiene services to patients outside of the

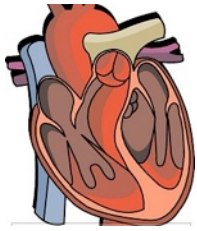
traditional dental offices or bill for those services. The WDHA played a crucial role in representing our interests in each of these areas. The WDHA continues to advocate for our profession and the most current effort involves removing restrictions from where a dental hygienist can provide dental hygiene care. The motivation for this is to improve access to care for people in need. This has been done successfully in dental/dental hygiene schools, public schools and through health departments across the state over the past 5-plus years without authorization from a dentist. [More>](#)



Antibiotic Prophylaxis for Bacteremia in Patients with Joint Replacements

Given the potential adverse outcomes and cost of treating an infected joint replacement, the AAOS recommends that clinicians consider antibiotic prophylaxis for all total joint replacement patients prior to any invasive procedure that may cause bacteremia. This is particularly important for those patients with one or more of the following risk factors. [More>](#)

Guidelines regarding antibiotics to prevent Infective Endocarditis



The American Heart Association recently updated its guidelines regarding which patients should take a precautionary antibiotic to prevent infective endocarditis (IE) before a trip to the dentist. The guidelines, published in *Circulation: Journal of the American Heart Association*,

are based on a growing body of scientific evidence that shows that, for most people, the risks of taking prophylaxis antibiotics for certain procedures outweigh the benefits. These guidelines represent a major change in philosophy.

The new guidelines show taking preventive antibiotics is not necessary for most people and, in fact, might create more harm than good. Unnecessary use of antibiotics could cause allergic reactions and dangerous antibiotic resistance. [More>](#)

Ashley Wolf
Student Liaison



I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the WDHA Student Liaison! My name is Ashley Wolf and I currently live in Hudson. I am currently finishing up my BSDH degree at Minnesota State University, Mankato. While furthering my degree, I have discovered that teaching is one of my passions! When I was in the dental hygiene program, it was important to me to get the most out of every experience I could. I tried to be involved in everything and I want to get that message across to the students. Being an active member in the WDHA is very rewarding and I am excited to get the students involved! To start 2010, the WDHA will once again, award scholarships to student members of the American Dental Hygienists' Association. The application forms will be sent out to each school very soon and the recipients will be announced in January! I am looking forward to a great year!

Peter Theo
WDHA Lobbyist



Who Will Decide the Future of Dental Hygiene in Wisconsin?

As Wisconsin dental hygienists, you have achieved tremendous success over the past several years. You have improved your education, training, scope of practice, and most importantly the level of respect you receive from patients, lawmakers and yes, even dentists. These successes did not just drop out of the sky and into your laps. They were the result of hard work and incredible sacrifices made by dedicated individuals from your profession.

Although these accomplishments were impressive, we must now focus on the future goals of the profession as well as protecting the gains we have made. Dental hygiene is a "legislated" profession which means everything you can and cannot do as a licensed hygienist is determined by Law makers and agency officials. The same decision making bodies responsible for lifting up the profession, can just as quickly pass legislation or adopt new rules to restrict and limit your ability to practice dental hygiene.

The legislative process is cyclical. Every two years we hold state elections with half of the 33 Senators up for election as well as all 99 Assembly representatives. This means that every two years the make-up of the legislature could change, bringing with it new people and new philosophies. Therefore, we must remain vigilant. Everything hygienists achieved over the past several years could be reversed if opponents of the profession have their way. This isn't hype, its reality!

What can you do to protect your profession? Although you cannot change the fact your profession is regulated by state law, you do have the power to influence who the decision-makers will be and how they will apply the law to your profession.

[More>](#)