


Assisting Highlights


Annual Issue

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Key to Productivity: The Professional Dental Assistant


March 6-12, 2011



Contributing to quality dental care, today's dental assistants are role models of professional development. Strengthening the entire dental team, they enhance patient satisfaction throughout the world.

March 6-12, 2011, has been designated by the American Dental Assistants Association, along with the American Dental Association, the Canadian Dental Association and the Canadian Dental Assistants' Association, as the perfect time to acknowledge and recognize the versatile, multitalented member of your dental team—your Dental Assistant.

ADA American Dental Association®
America's leading advocate for oral health



This message is promoted by the American Dental Association's Council on Dental Practice in cooperation with the American Dental Assistants Association, Chicago, IL, the Canadian Dental Assistants' Association, and the Canadian Dental Association, Ottawa, Ontario.

2011 Proposed Salary Guide for Dental Assistants

The Proposed Salary Guide is enclosed for your review. For 2011, SDAA increased the dental assistant salary guide by 2%.

We would like to encourage employers to consider the pay scale of your long term employees. Because they receive a percentage increase, without a step increase, they tend to receive a smaller increase than newer employees. This can create animosity within your office and does little to encourage employee loyalty. The value of long term staff is incalculable and in many instances they are irreplaceable.

If you want further wage information, SDAA does an informal wage survey every summer. The results are posted on our website in August/

September. It will provide information relative to years of experience/location and practice type. Check it out! Additionally, the CDAA will be conducting a national survey on wages and working conditions in March, 2011. As always it is interesting to see where Saskatchewan ranks nationally.

Saskatchewan still has a dental assistant shortage, as of year end there were 26 plus assistant positions "open" on our Job Board. We believe that wages go a long way to address employee retention and shortages. Wages have increased and thus we have been able to attract 29 new registrants from out of province.

- Our salary guide is designed to provide a range of salaries appropriate to different experience levels of dental assistants.
- Core inflation for Saskatchewan stood at .8% (August, 2010).
- As the baby boomers start to retire, employers will face further worker shortages. The profession of dentistry is no exception.
- Several dental assistants were accepted to dental hygiene and dental therapy training.
- Employers need to provide benefits in order to compete with corporations and unions. If you are unsure about offering benefits look into the corporate world to see what benefits are being experienced.
- In this light, we have posted an advertisement (page 4) for the benefit plan designed for dental assistants and office staff by the Canadian Dental Assistants Association (www.cdaabenefits.ca).
- How can dentists recoup the cost of staff? Dentists need to give dental assistants more responsibility in their skilled areas, based on their formal training.

How to Make Your Employees Happy, Motivated and Productive by Victorino Q. Abrugar

1. *Generous compensation:* Show to your employees that you are fair and generous. Good and intelligent employees can easily sense when they are not compensated fairly by their employers.
2. *Clear career paths:* Employees have their own career dreams. Be sure that you can provide your employees their road to career success that is aligned to your Company.
3. *Balance life:* People lives are not only revolving for work. Employees have their family life, love life, spiritual life and others. This should be considered by employers. Otherwise, your employees may leave you because of exhaustion or because they now want to dump you for the love of their families and other love ones.
4. *Comfortable working area:* Without it, employees will be uncomfortable and unhappy and will not be motivated to work hard and be productive. Employees have the right to a hazard-free environment. If you're not providing a well-ventilated and comfortable working area, you are depriving their rights.
5. *Role modeling:* As the boss, the leader, and supposedly the teacher in an organization, employers should become role models.
6. *Appreciation and recognition:* Praising or simply saying thank you to your employees for the good job they have done has the potential to inspire them.
7. *Team building:* Team building creates a closer and deeper relationship between members of an organization including staff personnel, managers and employers. Team building makes employees motivated and productive because of the essence of teamwork.
8. *Fair treatment:* Unfair treatment by employers will surely put an employee in a low morale condition. Judge them equally, recognize them equally, compensate them in a just manner, give them fair benefits, talk to them equally and smile at them equally.
9. *Proper assignment:* Putting employees in their right places is putting them in the places where they are most effective and efficient. To make your employees happy and productive, be sure to assign them in the areas where they are interested.
10. *Flexibility and space:* Employees are often not comfortable working while their bosses are watching them. Have you ever had someone watching over your shoulder while you type? It makes most of us nervous. Because of this, it is best if trust and confidence are established between employers and employees. Giving freedom and adequate space to employees makes them more flexible and capable of working productively.
11. *Listening:* Employers must be prepared to listen to their employees. They should listen and perhaps not do the talking especially in counselling employees. Furthermore, mere listening to their problems without taking actions to solve their problems will just make their morale lower. The greatest evidence that you have listened to them is the action you have taken for them.
12. *Tactful criticism:* Bosses shall always speak with justice and wisdom. Reckless criticism may discourage a person and destroy their will to work. Remember that you are dealing with human emotions and not with machines.
13. *Teach them to teach:* Give them a certain topic on subjects they are most knowledgeable of and assign them to become resource speakers in your office training and seminars. This will make them realize their strong points and at the same time will give them the opportunity to stand out from others and be proud of it. This will also uplift their zeal to work in your office.
14. *Direct them to kindness:* As you have demonstrated kindness and generosity to your employees by providing good benefits, you may also influence them to reflect kindness to others. You and your staff could become involved in a charity and practice human kindness.
15. *Promote health and fitness:* With all the stress incurred in today's workplace, there is a need for a wellness plan. With healthy and inspired employees in your office, expect an increase in production.

Reprinted from *Business Accent.com*, February 8, 2011 [edited by SDAA staff].

General Competencies for Dental Assistants in Saskatchewan

Dental Assistants in Saskatchewan hold a variety of competencies. Each member has a personalized skill list based on their original training along with post graduate course that has been completed. The vast majority of Saskatchewan dental assistants hold “core competencies” which are nationally considered to be competency 1 through 13.

Each dental assistant has been provided with a copy of their competency list and may request an additional copy at any time. This document should be reviewed during an interview or at assessment time. Individual competency lists have been created due in part to the variety of competencies taught at dental assistant training programs across the country; as well as the evolution of dental assistant training. If you have a question regarding the specific competencies taught by any school in Canada - our office staff are able to supply you with a competency list for a specific year.

POTENTIAL COMPETENCIES:

- 1 Dental Radiographs, Expose, Process, Mount
- 2 Dental Dam, Place & Remove
- 3 Preliminary Impressions & Bite Registration
- 4 Treatment Liners/Acid Etching/Bonding
- 5 Matrices/Wedges, Place & Remove
- 6 Rubber Cup Polishing
- 7 Oral Hygiene Instructions
- 8 Dietary Counselling
- 9 Fluoride Applications
- 10 Pit & Fissure Sealants & Acid Etching
- 11 Topical Anaesthetic
- 12 Remove Sutures/Surgical Dressings/Retraction Cord
- 13 Desensitizing Agents, Application
- 14 Pulp Vitality Testing
- 15 Polish amalgam restorations
- 16 Fabricate Temporary Crowns
- 17 Amalgam Insertion & Carving
- 18 Perform appropriate medical emergency procedures
- 19 Orthodontic Module
- 20 Temporary Crowns, Cement & Remove
- 21 Provisional Restorations, Place
- 22 Take Plaque Indices
- 23 Elastic Separators, Place
- 24 Restorative Implant Assisting Technology
- 25 Gingival Retraction Cord, Place & Remove
- 26 Coronal Whitening, Perform

Dental assistants have a responsibility to work within their scope of practice. Each dentist/employer shares this responsibility. Competencies may only be practised if the dental assistant is formally trained through an approved course which has been reported to the SDAA office and the treatment is assigned by the dentist.

POST GRADUATE COMPETENCIES:

The SIAST Wascana Insertion and Carving of Amalgam Restorations course for licensed dental assistants does **NOT** enable dental assistants to place and finish composite restorations. There are no expanded function dental assisting competencies associated with composite restorations. Occasionally the SDAA Registrar has received verbal complaints about dental assistants “operating a high speed” to adjust composite restorations and to adjust the bite on temporary and permanent crowns. In these instances the complainants have not been willing to sign a written complaint, however, as a preventative measure the SDAA Registrar has advised the dental assistant, the dentist employer and the CDSS Registrar regarding the unsubstantiated complaint.

Placement of retraction cord training for dental assistants has been well received. Please ensure that if you would like your dental assistant to pack cord that she/he is registered for the next course. Dental assistants may also place Expasyl and Traxodent.

Not all dental assistants are trained to place, cement & remove temporary crowns. This course is generally offered on request. Pending demand, SIAST will also offer the Restorative Implant Assisting Procedures for Dental Assistants. Please ensure that if you currently offer implants or plan to offer implants that your assistants have completed this program and have the necessary competencies added to their personalized list. Contact the Extension office at SIAST to apply for this course.

Please be reminded that dental assistants in Saskatchewan **cannot scale**. This skill has been protected in the Dental Disciplines Act for dentists and dental hygienists.

Unlicensed employees cannot call themselves dental assistants as that title is reserved to registered and licenced dental individuals. Saskatchewan Health has coined the title “Dental Aide” to identify these individuals. Their activities are limited to suctioning and retraction.

Oh, and when was the term “certified” dropped? Dental assistants have not been identified as certified since 1997!

Competitive Insurance Programs for Dental Office Staff



CDA Benefit Program

<http://www.cdaabenefits.ca/>



The CDAA Benefits Program offers competitive rates and covers all the important features of financial security should tragedy occur.

Job Board Update

- SDAA listed 181 dental assistant positions on our job board during 2010. Of this, 155 positions were filled and 26 remained open at year end.
- If you want to visit the SDAA Job Board, go to the SDAA website at www.sdaa.sk.ca. Click "Careers", select "Job Board" and the various communities are listed on the drop box..
- The Job Board continued to allow any Dental Practice to advertise current openings at no charge.
- To post a position, go to the SDAA website, click careers and click "Job Board". Information can be entered directly into an on-line form and submitted directly to our office, or a posting form can be downloaded using Adobe Acrobat Reader, completed and faxed to our office for posting. If you are not online—phone our office with the information on your position. Our staff will be pleased to assist you.
- Dental Assistants from within Saskatchewan and surrounding provinces visit our website and our service has worked well for many offices.
- SDAA will not re-post ads to hold your position at the top of the list. The job board is a service to our members and SDAA has no obligation to post any position. So, if you pull a position, we will not re-list that position for two weeks. You may amend your original document at any time.

"Respected, Responsible, Educated Healthcare Professionals"



The 2011 Annual Register of Dental Assistants is enclosed. Please review this document carefully to ensure that the dental assistants in your employ are currently licenced, and also determine if they hold a practising or non practising licence.

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