

Parkland College Dental Hygiene Program Goals

1. The program will provide career education to prepare entry-level dental hygienists. The students will possess the knowledge, skills, values and ethics to practice the dental hygiene process of care. (Teaching, Patient Care, Research, Service)
2. The program will provide the community with excellent dental hygiene patient care that is in the best interest of the patient, appropriate and complete. (Teaching, Patient Care, Research, Service)
3. The program will provide instruction in research principles, research analysis and interpretation to enable a commitment to evidence based decision making and lifelong learning. (Teaching, Patient Care, Research)
4. The program will promote beneficence by participation in community health promotion and outreach services. (Teaching, Service)

Scope of Practice of Dental Hygienists American Dental Hygiene Association Standards for Clinical Dental Hygiene Practice

Dental hygiene practice as defined by the American Dental Hygiene Association, "Standards for Clinical Dental Hygiene Practice" revised 2016, states, "Dental hygiene is the science and practice of recognition, prevention and treatment of oral diseases and conditions as an integral component of total health. The dental hygienist is a primary care oral health professional who has graduated from an accredited dental hygiene program in an institution of higher education, licensed in dental hygiene to provide education, assessment, research, administrative, diagnostic, preventive and therapeutic services that support overall health through the promotion of optimal oral health. In practice, dental hygienists integrate multiple roles to prevent oral diseases and promote health."

Dental hygienists work in partnership with all members of the dental team. Dentists and dental hygienists practice together as colleagues, each offering professional expertise for the goal of providing optimum oral health care to the public. The distinct roles of the dental hygienist and dentist complement and augment the effectiveness of each professional and contribute to a collaborative environment. Dental hygienists are viewed as experts in their field; are consulted about appropriate dental hygiene interventions; are expected to make clinical dental hygiene decisions; and are expected to plan, implement, and evaluate the dental hygiene component of the overall care plan. All states define their specific dental hygiene practice scope and licensure requirements.

Dental hygienists can apply their professional knowledge and skill in a variety of work settings as clinicians, educators, researchers, administrators, entrepreneurs, and public health professionals, and as employees in corporate settings. The private dental office continues to be the primary place of employment for dental hygienists. However, never before has there been more opportunity for professional growth. Clinical dental hygienists may be employed in a variety of health care settings including, but not limited to, private dental offices, schools, public health clinics, hospitals, managed care organizations, correctional institutions, or nursing homes.