

On Feb. 6, 2015, the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) adopted national dental therapist education program standards.<sup>1 2</sup>

- ***CODA adopted dental therapist standards are consistent with Vermont's Licensed Dental Practitioner Proposal.***
- ***Vermont's education institutions will be able to use these standards to establish quality, accredited dental therapist programs.***

***These standards will be able to apply to educational institutions that establish dental therapist education programs.*** The CODA standards are consistent with key components of the licensed dental practitioner model.

**The CODA standards allow for:**

- Flexible training programs, three years in length that result in any degree level - an associate's, bachelor's or master's level program.
- Granting of advanced standing, enabling an accelerated education pathway for hygienists and dental assistants to be trained and educated to be eligible to become licensed dental practitioners.
- Licensed dental therapists to practice under the general/off-site supervision of a dentist.

***Why is CODA adoption of accreditation standards for dental therapist training programs important for VT?***

- Recognition from the national dental accrediting body that national dental therapy education standards are in the best interest of the dental profession and the public.
- Highlights that the emerging dental therapy profession deserves recognition as a profession and one national standard for training programs.
- Establishes a streamlined national framework for dental therapy programs, making the process of establishing dental therapy training programs much easier for Vermont's institutions of higher education.
- A national accrediting body can accredit Vermont's training program.
- Graduates of Vermont's CODA accredited institutions will be guaranteed access to financial aid and the assurance of receiving a quality education, as well as recognition by other educational institutions and employers of the course credits and degrees they have earned.
- CODA, having decades of experience in dental program accreditation, will be responsible for accrediting Vermont's Licensed Dental Practitioner Training Program and Vermont's Dental Board and regulatory agencies will not have any financial burden or regulatory responsibility of certifying the state's training program.

***What is the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA)?***

- CODA is nationally recognized by the U.S Department of Education as the sole agency that accredits dentist, hygienist, dental assistant and other dental professional education programs in the United States.
- CODA establishes dental education program standards and for the life of the dental program, continually oversees a rigorous set of criteria that must be met by the educational institution for a dental program to become CODA accredited and for it to retain its CODA accreditation.

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<sup>1</sup> Communication fr. CODA Commissioner Ana Karina Mascarenhas DDS. (2/6/15).

<sup>2</sup> Communication fr. American Dental Hygienist Association (ADHA) staff observer of CODA hearing. Vote count: 22 yes, 6 no, 2 abstentions (2/6/15).