

# THE ROOT OF QUALITY DENTAL CARE is Education and Training

Floridians deserve to receive the best quality of care from a licensed dentist with the full body of knowledge and experience to provide the highest level of diagnosis and treatment.

## Florida dentists complete **8+ YEARS OF EXTENSIVE EDUCATION AND TRAINING:**

- Four-year Bachelor degree
- Four years at a U.S. accredited dental school
- 1-6 years additional training for specialty or state requirements
- Completion of three national and state-level licensing examinations

### **The Mouth Affects the Body, The Body Affects the Mouth**

Dentists' areas of care include not only patients' teeth and gums, but also the muscles of the head, neck and jaw, the tongue, salivary glands, the nervous system of the head and neck and other areas.

### **DENTISTS ARE TRAINED TO KNOW:**

- The chemistry of anesthesia and medications and how they interact with your mouth and body.
- All the facets of your mouth, including teeth, jaw, bones, tendons, gums, nerves and functionality, how they impact procedures, and vice versa.
- How medical conditions, such as heart disease, kidney disease, gum disease, lung disease and cancer, and treatment medications affect your mouth and teeth, and vice versa.
- How to identify undiagnosed conditions such as oral cancer, kidney disease or human papillomavirus (HPV).
- How to manage potentially life-threatening medical emergencies that may occur during or following a procedure.

### **Your Mouth, Body and Health are Unique to You**

There is no simple or one-size-fits-all procedure. X-rays give a good picture of what is happening below the surface, but often the extent of a dental condition can only be determined by a dentist during a dental procedure.

### **DENTISTS ARE TRAINED TO KNOW:**

- How to diagnose and treat the underlying cause of the dental condition, such as infection or root damage.
- Which teeth are integral to the structure of the mouth and how to ensure that structure is supported – particularly for children with developing teeth and mouths.
- The full spectrum of treatment options and potential ramifications, such as nerve damage, loss of bite function, infection, and tooth loss, and how these options provide the best treatment course for the best patient outcome.
- How to effectively communicate to patients the recommended course of action to empower them to be their own best oral health advocate.



## Ensuring a High Standard of Care for Floridians

The FDA believes all Floridians deserve to be treated by a dentist trained to properly diagnose and address any issue that may arise during a dental procedure. **The FDA does not support any proposal for a new licensed dental provider that would lower the standard of dental care for Floridians by allowing irreversible surgical procedures, such as drilling and extracting teeth, to be performed by anyone who is not a dentist.**

## Florida Dentists Work with Health Care Professionals and Dental Team Members to Ensure Quality Oral Health Care

Florida dentists collaborate with other health care professionals and supervise the following core group of dental team members to provide comprehensive care that ensures every factor impacting a patient's mouth and overall health is reflected in the diagnosis and treatment plan.

### ■ Dental Hygienists

- Associate's degree from accredited dental hygiene program and national and state-level licensing
- Services: review health histories, screenings, dental X-ray processing, removal of plaque and calculus, and application of fluorides and sealants. Supervision of these services by dentists are outlined specifically in Florida laws and rules

### ■ Dental Laboratory Technicians

- Associate's degree or apprenticeship training and certification from accredited dental laboratory technology program
- Services: Develop all types of dental restorations, prostheses and appliances, such as crowns, dentures, dental implants, mouth guards and orthodontic retainers

### ■ Dental Assistants

- Certified by accredited dental assistant program or course/program approved by the Florida Board of Dentistry
- Services: Directly assisting dentists during diagnostic and treatment services

### ■ Community Dental Health Coordinator (CDHC)

CDHCs are dental professionals who are trained to work in their own communities to help educate and advocate for individuals in underserved communities and bridge barriers to oral health, such as poverty, geography, language, culture and a lack of understanding of oral hygiene.

- Prerequisite: Registered dental hygienist or expanded functions dental assistant
- Completion of CDHC curriculum and community outreach internship (under supervision of dentists)
- Services: Community outreach, oral health education, preventive services and assistance in navigating the health care system and advocating for patients



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