



DATE: September 29, 2006

TO: ADEA Institutional and Individual Members

FROM: ADEA Commission on Change and Innovation in Dental Education

SUBJECT: Call for Comments: Competencies for the New General Dentist

Nearly 10 years ago the American Association of Dental Schools (now ADEA) House of Delegates adopted the document, *Competencies for the New Dentist* ([http://www.adea.org/CEPRWeb/DEPR/ADEA\\_Policy\\_Statements/2004/Competencies%20for%20the%20New%20Dentist.pdf](http://www.adea.org/CEPRWeb/DEPR/ADEA_Policy_Statements/2004/Competencies%20for%20the%20New%20Dentist.pdf)). The document, containing 63 competency statements, has never been updated. *Competencies for the New Dentist* document has been used by many dental schools as a reference, the Joint Commission on National Dental Examinations in its practice analysis for National Boards, and by other organizations.

The ADEA Commission on Change and Innovation (CCI) engaged a special ADEA Council of Sections Task Force to create a new document reflecting current and emerging dental practice, with a particular focus on educational goal of the predoctoral curriculum: the new general dentist. The Task Force has worked on the attached document for over a year, reviewing competency documents from nearly every dental school in the United States and Canada and gaining input from many others about the competencies required of the new general dentist. While CCI recognizes that each dental school has its own set of competencies that correspond to the school's unique mission, *Competencies for the New General Dentist* is intended as a reference for schools as they undergo curricular changes. In addition, CCI hopes that this updated document will prove useful to external agencies such as the Commission on Dental Accreditation and the Joint Commission on National Dental Examinations.

This Call for Comments is the first step in seeking input from the dental education community and others about the usefulness and scope of the *Competencies for the New General Dentist*. The document is a draft, a work in progress. CCI will hold an Open Forum at the ADEA Annual Session to hear comments from ADEA members. Comments will go to the Council of Sections Task Force and a revised document will be circulated externally to the dental practice community and to other health professions for feedback. CCI anticipates submitting a final document to the 2008 ADEA House of Delegates for approval. To ensure that the document remains current, ADEA will update the document every five years.

CCI welcomes your comments to the attention of Ms. Jackie Chmar, Policy Analyst, at [chmarj@adea.org](mailto:chmarj@adea.org), 202-289-7204 (fax), or ADEA, 1400 K Street NW, Suite 1100, Washington, DC 20005. CCI and the Council of Sections Task Force looks forward to hearing from you.

To learn about other CCI activities, visit <http://www.adea.org/CCI/default.htm>.

# **COMPETENCIES FOR THE GENERAL DENTIST**

**SEPTEMBER 12, 2006**

## **PREAMBLE**

The general dentist is the primary oral health care provider, supported by dental specialists, allied dental professionals, and other health care providers. The general dentist will address health care issues beyond traditional oral health care and must be able to independently and collaboratively practice evidence-based comprehensive dentistry with the ultimate goal of improving the health of society. The general dentist must have a broad biomedical and clinical education and be able to demonstrate professional and ethical behavior as well as effective communication and interpersonal skills. In addition, he/she must have the ability to evaluate and utilize emerging technologies, continuing professional development opportunities and problem-solving and critical thinking skills to effectively address current and future issues in health care.

As used in this document, a competency is a complex behavior or ability essential for the general dentist to begin independent, unsupervised dental practice. Competency includes knowledge, experience, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, professionalism, ethical values, and technical and procedural skills. These components become an integrated whole during the delivery of patient care by the competent general dentist. Competency assumes that all behaviors are performed with a degree of quality consistent with patient well-being and that the general dentist can self-evaluate treatment effectiveness. In competency-based dental education, what students learn is based upon clearly articulated competencies and further assumes that all behaviors/abilities are supported by foundation knowledge and psychomotor skills in biomedical, behavioral, ethical, clinical dental science and informatics areas that are essential for independent and unsupervised performance as an entry-level general dentist. In creating curricula, dental faculty must consider the competencies to be developed through the educational process, the learning experiences that will lead to the development of these competencies, and ways to assess or measure the attainment of competencies.

The purpose of this document and the accompanying foundation knowledge concepts are to:

- Define the competencies necessary for entry into the dental profession as a general dentist. Competencies must be relevant and important to the patient care responsibilities of the general dentist, directly linked to the oral health care needs of the public, realistic, and understandable by other health care professionals;
- In contrast to the 1997 competencies, the new competencies reflect the 2002 IOM core set of competencies for enhancing patient care quality and safety, illustrate current and emerging trends in the dental practice environment, are divided into domains, are broader and less prescriptive in nature, are fewer in number, and most importantly are linked to requisite foundation knowledge and skills;
- Serve as a central resource, both nationally for ADEA and locally for individual dental schools, to promote change and innovation in predoctoral dental school curricula;
- Inform and recommend to the Commission on Dental Accreditation standards for predoctoral dental education;
- Provide a framework for the change, innovation, and construction of national dental examinations, including those provided through the Joint Commission on National Dental Examinations and clinical testing agencies;

- Assist the development of curriculum guidelines, both nationally for ADEA and locally for individual dental schools, for both foundation knowledge and clinical instruction;
- Provide methods for assessing competencies for the general dentist.
- Through periodic review and update, serve as a document for benchmarking, best practice, and interprofessional collaboration and additionally, as a mechanism to inform educators in other health care professions about curricular priorities of dental education and entry-level competencies of general dentists.

### **Domains**

- 1. Critical Thinking**
- 2. Professionalism**
- 3. Communication and Interpersonal Skills**
- 4. Health Promotion**
- 5. Practice Management and Informatics**
- 6. Patient Care**
  - A. Assessment, Diagnosis, and Treatment Planning**
  - B. Establishment and Maintenance of Oral Health**

The statements below define the entry-level competencies for the beginning general dentist:

#### **1. Critical Thinking**

**Graduates must be competent to:**

- 1.1 Evaluate and assess emerging trends in health care.
- 1.2 Utilize critical thinking and problem solving skills in patient care.
- 1.3 Integrate best research outcomes with clinical expertise and patient values for evidence-based care.

#### **2. Professionalism**

**Graduates must be competent to:**

- 2.1 Apply appropriate ethical and legal standards in the provision of dental care to patients.
- 2.2 Practice within the scope of competence and refer to professional colleagues when indicated.

#### **3. Communication and Interpersonal Skills**

**Graduates must be competent to:**

- 3.1 Apply appropriate interpersonal and communication skills in patient health care.
- 3.2 Apply psychosocial and behavioral principles in patient-centered health care.
- 3.3 Communicate effectively with patients from diverse populations.

#### **4. Health Promotion**

**Graduates must be competent to:**

4.1 Provide appropriate prevention, intervention, and educational strategies for all patients.

4.2 Participate with other health care professionals in the management and health promotion for all patients.

4.3 Recognize and appreciate the need to contribute to the improvement of oral health beyond those served in traditional practice settings.

## **5. Practice Management and Informatics**

### **Graduates must be competent to:**

5.1 Evaluate and apply contemporary and emerging information including clinical and practice management technology resources in patient care.

5.2 Evaluate and manage different models of oral health care management and delivery.

5.3 Apply principles of risk management, including informed consent and appropriate record keeping in patient care.

5.4 Demonstrate effective business, financial management, and human resource skills.

5.5 Apply quality assurance, assessment, and improvement concepts in patient care.

5.6 Comply with state and federal regulations including OSHA and HIPAA.

5.7 Develop a catastrophe preparedness plan for the dental practice.

## **6. Patient Care**

### **A. Assessment, Diagnosis, and Treatment Planning**

#### **Graduates must be competent to:**

6.1 Obtain and interpret patient data and use these findings to accurately assess and manage patients.

6.2 Select, obtain, and interpret radiographic / digital images for the individual patient.

6.3 Recognize the oral manifestations of systemic disease and how the disease and its management may affect the delivery of dental care.

6.4 Formulate a comprehensive diagnosis, treatment and / or referral plan for the management of patients.

### **B. Establishment and Maintenance of Oral Health**

#### **Graduates must be competent to:**

6.5 Utilize universal infection control guidelines for all clinical procedures.

6.6 Prevent, identify, and manage pain and anxiety in the dental patient.

- 6.7 Manage the pediatric, adolescent, adult, geriatric and the special needs patient and prevent, identify, and manage oral diseases and disorders in these patients.
- 6.8 Prevent, identify and manage periodontal diseases.
- 6.9 Develop and implement strategies for the clinical management of caries.
- 6.10 Manage preventive and restorative procedures that preserve tooth structure, are esthetic, and promote soft and hard tissue health.
- 6.11 Recognize and manage developmental or acquired occlusal abnormalities.
- 6.12 Manage the replacement of teeth for the partially or completely edentulous patient.
- 6.13 Prevent, identify, and manage pulpal and periradicular diseases.
- 6.14 Manage oral surgical procedures.
- 6.15 Prevent, identify, and manage medical and dental emergencies.
- 6.16 Recognize and manage patient abuse and/or neglect.
- 6.17 Recognize and manage substance abuse.
- 6.18 Evaluate outcomes of comprehensive dental care