



CANADIAN DENTAL ASSOCIATION
ASSOCIATION DENTAIRE CANADIENNE

Additional Information Requested by the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance (NFFN)

Following oral testimony provided on October 26, 2022

About the Canadian Dental Association

The Canadian Dental Association (CDA) represents the dental profession across Canada and is a trusted brand and source of information for and about the dental profession, on national and international issues. CDA is the national voice for dentistry dedicated to the promotion of optimal oral health, an essential component of general health, and to the advancement and leadership of the dental profession. CDA is a federation of Canada's provincial and territorial dental associations (PDAs) and works alongside them to represent dentists from coast to coast to coast.

Proportion of dentists seeing paediatric patients

Most general dentists treat children under age 12. Based on electronic claim submissions from the first nine months of 2022 across all provinces and territories, 95.5% of dentists submitting claims submitted at least one for a child under age 12.

Paediatric dentistry is a branch and specialty of dentistry concerned with providing primary and comprehensive preventive and therapeutic oral health diagnosis, care, and consultative expertise for infants and children through adolescence, including those of all ages with special care needs. As of September 30, 2022, 409 out of 25,546 licensed dentists in Canada were licensed specialists in paediatric dentistry.

Average treatment cost per visit

Based on a representative sample of more than 109,000 electronic claims submitted in March 2022 across all provinces and territories, the median claim per visit for a patient under age 12 was \$150. Half of all claims fell between \$92 and \$233. Across jurisdictions, the median claim per visit ranged from a low of \$99 to a high of \$242, with eleven of thirteen jurisdictions having a median claim between \$118 and \$176.

Given the wide range of fees at the higher end of the distribution, the average claim amount skewed higher at \$242, ranging across jurisdictions from \$147 to \$291.

Overall, 95.6% of all claims submitted for children under age 12 were for less than \$650. This was consistent across jurisdictions ranging from a low of 91.4% to a high of 99.3%. Among claims that included a recall examination of an existing patient under age 12, the average amount was \$172, with amounts varying across jurisdictions from \$113 to \$259.



Recommendations relating to Indigenous Oral Health

CDA has a long-standing interest in the dental component of the federal government's Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) program for eligible First Nations and Inuit. CDA representatives have participated in a Technical Working Group with officials at Health Canada (HC), and subsequently Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), for more than a decade, meeting semi-annually to provide technical feedback on the dental services covered by the NIHB program. These conversations also frequently include representatives from the Assembly of First Nations, the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, and more recently the Indigenous Dental Association of Canada.

In May 2022, CDA was pleased to participate in a study by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs (INAN) of the *Administration and Accessibility of Indigenous Peoples to the NIHB Program*. Please find attached CDA's written brief submitted to the committee, as well as a copy of the introductory remarks prepared for CDA President Dr. Lynn Tomkins for her May 13th testimony to the committee.

CDA made three broad recommendations to INAN, namely:

1. Enhance access to surgical facilities for Indigenous children with NIHB coverage who require dental treatment under general anaesthesia.
2. Improve the administrative efficiency of the program for patients and providers, particularly with respect to procedures such as partial dentures¹ and crowns, as well as the eligibility of services such as night guards for bruxism and space maintainers.
3. In partnership with Indigenous governments and other relevant stakeholders, invest in a broader Indigenous oral health strategy to close the gaps in oral health outcomes between Indigenous communities and the general population.

¹ CDA was disappointed to be informed by ISC officials in September 2022 of the premature cancellation of an ongoing Partial Denture Trial Project, allowing submission of pre-authorization requests via fax with an expedited 3-day turnaround. This was originally launched in 2018 as an eight-year long initiative and was demonstrating a 98% compliance rate, presaging the possibility of dropping the predetermination requirement for partial dentures altogether. Instead, ISC will be reverting to requiring paper submissions via mail.