

## **Dear Tentative Dental Hygiene Student:**

We are pleased that you are considering the Dental Hygiene program. This "Question and Answer" booklet will answer many of the common questions about the program. It may also raise additional questions which can be answered during a counseling session.

Cordially,

Susan Leiken  
Director, Dental Hygiene Program

Joseph Burkhardt  
Counselor, Division of Allied Health & Nursing Students

### ***What is a dental hygienist?***

A dental hygienist is a licensed preventive oral health professional who provides educational, clinical and therapeutic services to the public. In order to become prepared to perform these services, the dental hygienist requires an extensive educational background.

As a licensed professional, you will join nurses, physical therapists, dentists, physicians, dietitians and others who practice under licensure -- the strongest form of regulation used today. In accordance with state law, licensed individuals are the only persons meeting the minimum qualifications necessary to practice their profession.

Although most dental hygienists work in private dental offices, dental hygiene offers a variety of career options with ample opportunity for professional advancement. The many roles a dental hygienist plays include clinician, educator, administrator/ manager, researcher, consumer advocate and change agent. Read on to see how you can take advantage of the dental hygiene program at LCCC.

### ***As a clinician, what services will I perform?***

- Review health histories
- Check head, neck and oral areas for disease
- Perform oral cancer screenings
- Remove hard and soft deposits (calculus, stain, plaque) from tooth surfaces above and below the gum line
- Provide oral health instructions
- Apply caries preventive agents (fluoride, sealants) to the teeth
- Provide dietary analysis and counseling
- Expose, process and interpret dental x-rays
- Place and remove temporary fillings and periodontal dressings
- Remove sutures
- Polish and recontour amalgam fillings
- Monitor nitrous oxide sedation

### ***What personal characteristics are needed to be successful in Dental Hygiene?***

Students who are successful in Dental Hygiene are emotionally mature, academically able, highly motivated, self-disciplined and willing and able to devote a considerable amount of time to their program. They are patient and enjoy working with and serving people. They have good manual dexterity. They use all sensory perceptions as well as mental and intellectual skills in verbal, written, mathematical and scientific areas. They must be able to perform under stressful conditions.

### ***What basic academic skills are needed in the Dental Hygiene program?***

Students who are successful in Dental Hygiene have good skills in reading, writing, mathematics and science. High school algebra, chemistry, and biology, or equivalent courses at the College level, are required for admission to the program.

***What can I do if I have not had these courses or my skills are weak?***

The College offers coursework in developmental education if the College placement assessment process or high school transcripts indicate remedial work to be necessary to satisfy academic deficiencies. Your counselor can recommend specific courses to fit your situation.

***What are the requirements for admission to the program?***

See the Letter of Intent for more information, or contact the Allied Health and Nursing counselor.

***How long will it take before I can start the clinical portion of my program?***

Because there are more applicants to the Dental Hygiene program than spaces available, it is necessary that you complete a Letter of Intent in the LCCC Admission Office. The actual length of time it will take to begin the clinical portion of the program depends on the number of people who have filed letters of intent before you filed yours and the academic preparation of those applicants. Until you are notified of a place in the class, we recommend that you do not make major changes in your life, such as quitting a job or moving.

***When will I be notified of acceptance to the Dental Hygiene program?***

Fifteen students are admitted each Fall semester to begin the Dental Hygiene program. Letters of acceptance and/or denial are mailed from the Admission Office on or before May 15<sup>th</sup>. When you are accepted, you will be required to make a \$50 non-refundable deposit to hold your clinical place. There will be a deadline date by which you must pay or lose your place. The \$50 deposit will be applied toward your tuition. The letter notifying you of a clinical place will give you detailed instructions on the registration process. A physical exam form will also be sent at this time. A physical examination, including TB testing and the Hepatitis B series, is a requirement for entrance into the clinical part of the Dental Hygiene program and must be completed at the student's expense.

***What can I do if I am not accepted into the program?***

Students who are not accepted are encouraged to complete courses listed on the Dental Hygiene curriculum sheet, beginning with Anatomy & Physiology (BIOG 121) and Chemistry, and the liberal arts courses in English, Psychology, and Sociology. The Dental Hygiene program is very intense and will occupy a great deal of time. It is to your benefit to complete as many of the support courses as possible before acceptance.

***What facilities are used for clinical training?***

The dental hygiene clinic is located in the Health Sciences building on the LCCC campus, room HS 105. The clinical portion of the program is predominately completed on campus. However, in the second year, some community travel is expected.

***How is the Dental Hygiene program set up?***

First year students can expect day lectures to be held at the College 2-4 days a week in the Dental Hygiene major courses. In addition, clinic sessions are held 2-3 times per week.

Second year students can expect a major focus on clinical sessions of up to 4 a week, including one evening session.

***Will I have to attend classes in the Summer?***

Yes. You will be required to take two Dental Hygiene courses in the Summer; this amounts to 4 days per week for 8 weeks.

***Does the college have baby-sitting services?***

Yes. Inquiries should be made at the LCCC Child Care Center, ext. 4038.

***Will I be able to schedule required (non-Dental Hygiene) courses at times near or convenient to my Dental Hygiene classes?***

Because the times Dental Hygiene courses are scheduled cut across many hours, it is often necessary for students to schedule other classes at times that are not convenient. Dental Hygiene students, for example, may have to take a required course in the evening.

***What suggestions do you have that would increase the likelihood of my being successful in Dental Hygiene?***

- First: Make up whatever deficiencies you have in the basic skills of reading, writing, math and science. Your counselor will help you determine these.
- Second: Take as many of the academic courses as possible before entering the program. If it is not possible to take all of the courses, try to complete the science courses. It is recommended that students complete their science requirements no more than one academic year prior to admission to the clinical program. It is required that students achieve at least a grade of "C" in their science courses. Remember, the academic courses must be taken before, or along with, the Dental Hygiene courses -- not afterward.

Students who are still in high school and who wish to be placed on the waiting list must apply to the College and file a **Letter of Intent** for the Dental Hygiene program. High school students may also wish to consider the Post-Secondary Enrollment Option (PSEO) program as a way of taking a few academic courses at the College while they are still in high school. Your high school counselor can advise you if he or she feels this would be a good program for you.

***With what courses should I begin and how many?***

This should be discussed with your counselor, taking into consideration your educational background, work and personal obligations. Note that you must meet the criteria listed on the **Letter of Intent** for admission to the program.

***How many hours of outside study will I need per week?***

A general College guideline indicates that, on an average, students need two to three hours of outside study for each hour in class.<sup>8</sup>

***Can I work while I am in the program?***

A general College guideline indicates that students taking 12 or more hours (full-time) may work a maximum of 15-20 hours per week. Many Dental Hygiene students find they are not able to work at all while they are taking Dental Hygiene courses.

***Is financial aid available for Dental Hygiene students?***

Financial aid is available to qualified students through the Financial Aid Office. Allied Health and Nursing students are urged to make inquiry to determine if they are eligible. In addition, several dental and dental hygiene organizations offer scholarships throughout the academic year. Information is available from the program director after acceptance into the Dental Hygiene program.

***Is there a student dental hygiene organization.***

Yes. Membership in the Student Chapter of the American Dental Hygiene Association (SADHA) is a program requirement; the fee is included in the College fees for the program.

***How much does the program cost?***

The Dental Hygiene program costs include: regular College tuition costs, an additional \$995.00 in lab fees, textbook costs, 3 sets of uniforms, shoes, approximately \$1000.00 for instruments, and purchase of all personal protection equipment needed throughout the clinical training.

***Can I re-enter the program if I withdraw?***

Yes. Students who withdraw from the program without completing the first Dental Hygiene course (DNHY 121) should immediately file a new Letter of Intent and when their name comes back up on the list another place may be offered to them. Students who complete the first Dental Hygiene courses or beyond and withdraw should see the Allied Health and Nursing counselor immediately to be put on a waiting list for re-entry. Proficiency students, re-admits and transfers from other programs are admitted as places are available. Students should not withdraw from the program without discussing their situation with a member of the Dental Hygiene faculty and the Allied Health and Nursing counselor. Formal withdrawal procedures must be followed.

***What accommodations are there for students with special needs?***

The Office for Special Needs exists to serve the needs of students with disabilities - physical, learning and/or emotional. If you are a person with a disability who needs accommodations or assistance, contact the O.S.N.S. located in Room 115 in the Learning Resource Center.  
Coordinator - Ms. Scott                      Phone - ext. 4058

***MY QUESTIONS:***