

Registered Dental Hygienist (RDH)

Reports to: Dental Director

Location: Yreka Dental Clinic

Salary: Depends on Experience

Summary: Shall be responsible to oversee the day to day Dental Hygiene activities of the dental clinics. Shall implement and follow all organizational wide dental policies and procedures. Shall demonstrate the ability to appropriately diagnose and treat program patients of all ages to achieve the best results possible, within an estimated treatment time, with maximum concern for patient comfort and deliver quality care. Then appropriately document: findings, diagnosis, patient's medication conditions, allergies, patient's general oral health and treatment rendered. Shall serve as a member of the dental team and participate in the dental CQI projects.

1) What are your typical job responsibilities?

I am responsible for educating patients about their oral health and the affect poor oral health has on the body as a whole. I also am responsible for coordinating the Yreka area community oral health services, implementing the Head Start screenings and fluoride varnish program, taking oral radiographs, applying sealants, and providing oral prophylaxis, scaling and root planning, or perio maintenance therapy.

2) How do you really spend your day?

Most at my day is spent at the dental chair providing direct patient care and/or education. In the event that I have a cancellation, my time is usually spent processing instruments for sterilization or helping to facilitate the Dentists schedule by seating and anesthetizing their next patient.

3) How do you organize your day to ensure you get everything done?

I try to focus on the patient and their needs. By doing this, it keeps me from getting side tracked which helps me to get all aspects of my job accomplished.

4) What education/career paths lead you to this position?

Were there any life changes that guided your way to this position (ex; closing of the mill, desire not to leave area, family)?

I have been involved with Dentistry for 27 ½ years, having entered the field straight out of high school. After raising my children and facing an empty nest, I decided to step up the next rail of the dental ladder and work towards getting my dental hygiene license. To do this, I worked 32 hours per week while completing the two years of pre-requisite classes at night. I then applied to and was accepted into Shasta Colleges – Dental Hygiene School. To complete this full-time program took another two years with a long commute to and from school.

5) Uppers; what is the thing that you love most about your job?

I love being able to make a difference in my patient's lives by helping them to achieve good oral health.

6) Downers; what is the thing that you love least about your job?

All the paperwork!!

7) What inspires, excites, and/or motivates you in your job?

When the patient is motivated to save their teeth instead of giving up and accepting the unnecessary fate of dentures.

8) What does your average work week schedule look like (ex; hours worked, meetings, appointments, traveling, etc.)?

I work Monday – Thursday from 8am – 5pm. Twice per year, I schedule a day out of the office for Head Start screenings w/ Fluoride varnish treatments. I also schedule time outside the office for other community service projects as needed.

9) How do you relieve stress?

I usually curl up with a good book or movie if I am really stressed.

10) Does your job include a lot of traveling?

No. Do you enjoy it? N/A

11) What advice would you give to someone interested in this line of work?

I would encourage anyone interested in healthcare to go into the Dental Hygiene profession. It is a great job for both males and females that offers flexibility and an excellent income. Also, this is one job that allows you to expand into research, public health policy, pharmaceuticals, or teaching if you complete your Bachelors degree.

12) What does a typical day in your world look like?

Smile after Smile after Smile!! Patient's arrive with a smile and leave with an even bigger smile, proud to show off those newly cleaned pearly whites!