JOB OPPORTUNITIES

The major responsibilities of the dental hygienist are preventive in nature. In the private dental office, the dental hygienist may be responsible for providing patient education, exposing and processing dental radiographs, conducting head and neck examinations, as well as providing a thorough oral prophylaxis, non-surgical periodontal therapy, local anesthesia, diet analysis and other services as delegated by the licensed dentist. In some large offices the dental hygienist may serve as a manager of office procedures. Dental hygiene services vary from state to state according to the laws that govern the practice of dental hygiene.

In public health and community agencies, the dental hygienist is concerned with the oral health of the community being served. Major responsibilities may be assessing the oral health of a given population or developing and implementing a dental health program. In hospitals and nursing homes, the dental hygienist may function as a health educator, a clinician or a resource person. In other instances, hygienists are employed for clinical and descriptive research projects.

Although the majority of dental hygiene graduates are involved in private practice, the following practice settings may also be available:

- Federal, state and local health departments.
- Hospitals and nursing homes.
- School districts.
- Health maintenance organizations.
- Educational programs for dental, dental hygiene and dental assisting students.
- Private and public centers for pediatric, geriatric and other special needs groups.

Graduates can take advantage of the Dental School’s job placement assistance service. The School of Dentistry's library maintains an extensive database of job opportunities in several states. Faculty members are available for job-placement counseling to assist graduates with placement decisions.