

New Accreditation Standards for Dental Therapy: What Are They and What Impact Will They Have?

**CODA Process, Content of Standards,
How they will shape a new profession**

Dr. Ana Karina Mascarenhas
Wednesday, April 20, 2016

Disclosure:

Dr. Ana Karina Mascarenhas is CODA Commissioner for Dental Public Health however the views presented in this presentation are her own and is not representing the Commission

Process and Timeline

- **Fall 2009:** Requests to accredit dental therapy and advanced dental therapy programs received from four groups in Minnesota
- **February 2010:** CODA directs formation of a Task Force on **New Dental Team Members** to investigate the requests.
- **August 2010:** Task Force developed “*Principles and Criteria for Eligibility of Allied Dental Programs for Accreditation by the Commission on Dental Accreditation*” formalized as an official CODA policy.

Principles and Criteria for Eligibility of Allied Dental Programs for Accreditation by the Commission on Dental Accreditation

1. Does the allied dental education area align with the accrediting agency's mission and scope?
2. Has the allied dental education area been in operation for a sufficient period of time to establish benchmarks and adequately measure performance?
3. Is the program part of an institution or clearly identified responsible entity encompassed under the agency's scope, e.g., formal, postsecondary education program leading to a bona fide educational credential (certificate or degree)?
4. Is there sufficient level of activity and expertise in the discipline, including individuals with the academic or professional credentials, to establish standards and sustain a quality review process?
5. Is there evidence of need and support from the public and professional communities to sustain educational programs in the discipline?

Process and Timeline

- **June 2011:** 2nd inquiry, and formal request submitted by the University of Minnesota requesting CODA to develop accreditation standards for **baccalaureate degree** programs in dental therapy.
 - Request included documentation which addressed the Principles and Criteria for Eligibility of Allied Dental Programs for Accreditation by CODA
- **August 2011:** CODA considered request and directed that a Task Force on Dental Therapy be formed to develop accreditation standards for baccalaureate degree dental therapy education programs.

Task Force on Dental Therapy

- **February 2012:** Appointed Task Force on Dental Therapy to develop accreditation standards for dental therapy education programs.
 - Task Force develops draft accreditation standards document for review at CODA's Winter 2013 meeting.
- **January 2013:** Circulation of the proposed dental therapy standards for one year, with four (4) open hearings scheduled.
 - ADEA, ADHA, ADAA, and ADA Annual Sessions.
 - Comment on the program track for dental therapy, proposed as a **3-year baccalaureate non-dental hygiene track**.
- **February 2014:** CODA received a report from the Dental Therapy Task Force. The report included:
 - Additional changes and recommended re-circulation for one year.

Process and Timeline

- **February 2015: Dental Therapy Standards Adopted**
 - No implementation of the Dental Therapy Standards until further documentation has been provided which shows that criteria #2 and #5 of the Principles and Criteria Eligibility of Allied Dental Programs for Accreditation are met.
 - **Criteria #2:** Has the allied dental education area been in operation for a sufficient period of time to establish benchmarks and adequately measure performance?
 - **Criteria #5:** Is there evidence of need and support from the public and professional communities to sustain educational programs in the discipline?

Process and Timeline

- **August 2015: Dental Therapy Standards Implemented**
 - Communities of interest provided documentation on criteria #2 and #5 of the Principles and Criteria Eligibility of Allied Dental Programs for Accreditation are met.
- Ad-Hoc Committee for Dental Therapy Implementation

Implementing Standards

- Ad-Hoc Committee on Dental Therapy Implementation
 - Developing Documents
 - Application, Self-study, Site visitor report
 - Review Committee
 - Site visiting Committee Composition
 - Site visitors/consultants
 - Training

Dental Therapy Standards

- Same structure as the other disciplines under CODA
- Mix of dental and dental hygiene standards depending on the content area
- Language used and expectations is the same across the disciplines

How Will They Shape A New Profession? What Do These Standards Mean?

- Credibility
- Standardizes Programs and Education Nationally
- Facilitates Licensure

Perceived Threats

- Standards are mix of dental and hygiene competencies
- At least three academic years of full-time instruction or its equivalent
- Not a hygiene-based model

Real Opportunities

- Ensures that DT are trained to the same standard as these well respected dental professionals
- At least four academic years of instruction or its equivalent
- Does not specify a “degree”
- Advanced standing for hygienist

Questions