

## **Dentists et al**

# **Frequently Asked Questions Concerning ADTO's *Suggested Fee Guide***

### **What is a Registered Dental Technologist (RDT)?**

A Registered Dental Technologist is a Regulated Health Professional. There are approximately 500 RDT's who are licensed to practice in Ontario.

RDTs make a major contribution to the practice of dentistry. For example, based on the specifications of a dentist's prescription, technologists fabricate orthodontic appliances, full dentures, partial dentures, crowns and bridges. They also produce a variety of other specialized products including surgical splints and sports mouthguards, as well as implant-related restorations.

At present, there are five major areas of dental technology: orthodontics, crowns and bridges, ceramics, partial dentures and full dentures. Today's Registered Dental Technologist is a highly trained and skilled professional. Their work, on behalf of their dental customers, is a unique combination of artistry and applied technology.

To become an RDT in Ontario one must successfully complete a three-year Dental Technology Program at Toronto's George Brown College. Upon graduation one must then work in a laboratory for a minimum of 1,950 hours (approximately one year) under the supervision of an RDT, before the individual is eligible to write the College of Dental Technologists (CDTO) examination. This is a two-part examination. Part one consists of a comprehensive written examination, wherein the baseline competencies are tested. Successful completion of the written exam entitles a candidate to sit a 4-day comprehensive practical examination. Here a candidate is thoroughly tested in all areas of dental technology. Successful completion of both examination stages entitles an individual to legally supervise or open their own laboratory and append the professional designation RDT to their name.

*Dentists Cont'd.*

Subsequently, every RDT must order a stamp with their professional licence number, name and title Dental Technologist on it. RDT's must ensure that all invoices sent to dentists have this stamp affixed to guarantee that the work contracted for was completed or supervised by a member of the College of Dental Technologists.

To maintain their professional standing in Ontario, an RDT must uphold the CDTO Code of Ethics, maintain a specified standard of practice, including mandatory supervisory provisions, and fulfill stringent continuing education requirements. RDTs are also subject to the CDTO's quality assurance program, wherein a percentage of members must undergo an annual third-party review.

### **What is the Association of Dental Technologists of Ontario (ADTO)?**

The ADTO is the governing provincial chapter of the Canadian Dental Technologists Association. Created in 1990, the Association provides a variety of professional services and specialized benefits to its approximately 500 Registered Dental Technologist (RDT) members. Government, media and the dental community recognize the ADTO as the authoritative voice of Ontario's dental technologists.

### **What is the Association's mandate?**

Our mandate is to represent the needs and interests of the membership. Our mission is to be the authoritative voice of dental technology in Ontario. To that end, the ADTO undertakes a series of initiatives to pursue the advancement of the profession through education, communication amongst members, and liaison with external agencies; and to encourage excellence in the provision of dental technology services

To achieve our goals a number of long-term objectives have been established, two of which relate directly the *Suggested Fee Guide*. They are:

- \* To advance the Science and Business of Dental Technology and to provide a source of knowledge to members of the dental profession, for the benefit

*Dentists Cont'd.*

of their clients and to raise the general standards of dental technology practice.

- \* To elevate the status and recognition of the dental technology profession, as a whole and its individual members by: the dental profession, governing bodies and associations of the dental profession, educational institutions, government, allied trade associations, manufacturers and suppliers, and the general public.

### **What is the ADTO's *Suggested Fee Guide*?**

The 2001 *Suggested Fee Guide* is a comprehensive listing of the most common professional services and procedures provided to dental practitioners by Registered Dental Technologists (RDT's). Each service and procedure is accompanied by a suggested professional fee, which has been researched and compiled by the ADTO. The *Suggested Fee Guide* is a member service and one of the major benefits of belonging to the Association.

### **Why is the *Suggested Fee Guide* necessary?**

The ADTO's Board of Directors acted to research and produce the *Suggested Fee Guide* in direct response to member requests. For some time, members have sought comparative pricing information that accurately reflects the current economic realities of Ontario's registered dental technology profession. Specifically, members wanted an impartial analysis of the true costs and time requirements necessary to perform the various professional services and procedures undertaken by RDT's. Both the Board and the membership believe that such a suggested fee guideline for Ontario is long overdue.

Additionally, in developing the current *Guide*, the Board wished to take this unique opportunity to produce a document that would set a benchmark level of pricing necessary to provide dentists and their patients with an uncompromised level of service and quality. We acknowledge that in a quickly evolving and highly competitive profession, our members are being asked to provide higher skill levels, and incorporate more sophisticated

*Dentists Cont'd.*

technology, into the services and procedures they provide. Consequently, this growing demand for enhanced skills and greater technological competence necessitated a complete review and revision of current industry pricing. The ADTO believes the current publication meets our members' needs and professional requirements, and will prove to be of great benefit to the province's entire dental community.

### **Why is the Association issuing its *Suggested Fee Guide* at this time?**

The simple answer is the ADTO's members need this publication — NOW. Ontario's Registered Dental Technologists have never had a comprehensive, province-wide compendium of services, procedures and suggested associated professional fees. The *Suggested Fee Guide* fills this void.

Regarding the specific timing of the publication's release, the ADTO chose this date — with a recommended Launch Date of **June 1, 2001** — to allow both members and their customers adequate time to plan for a problem-free implementation of the suggested new fee schedule.

### **How was the *Suggested Fee Guide* developed?**

It was produced by members of the ADTO's volunteer Board of Directors, assisted by the association's lawyer, accountant and an external business analyst. Our "Fee Guide Committee" was mandated to conduct a thorough investigation of the various professional services and procedures provided by Canada's Registered Dental Technologists. The Committee was also asked to provide the Board with suggested industry-standard professional fees regularly charged by RDT's for these activities.

Research and production of the *Suggested Fee Guide* was a lengthy, multi-stage process. As part of this process, a detailed Fee Guide Survey was sent to all ADTO members. Results from this survey proved of inestimable value in developing the final *Guide*. The Committee then prepared a comprehensive listing of all of the standard professional services and procedures.

*Dentists Cont'd.*

Committee members then undertook extensive time studies relating to these services and procedures. Here, each item was analyzed to determine the amount of time required to properly complete an item's related tasks. Upon completion of the time studies, the Committee then analyzed all other normal business expenditures. These activities resulted in the establishment of a Gross Billing Rate, or Minute Rate. This number is a dollar value assigned to one minute of labour. Included in the Minute Rate are:

1. Overhead costs (e.g. rent, taxes, maintenance, insurance and utilities).
2. Labour.
3. Furniture, equipment and maintenance costs.
4. Supplies, sundries and minor material costs.
5. Costs associated with maintaining all requirements set forth by the College of Dental Technologists of Ontario (CDTO).

Fees for all procedures included in the accompanying *Suggested Fee Guide* have been established by taking the estimated number of minutes it takes to complete a procedure and multiplying this time estimate by the Minute Rate.

For certain services entailing a higher degree of risk or responsibility (e.g. porcelain bridges or veneers) the Committee assigned an additional percentage to each fee to compensate for these added risks and responsibilities. (Note: Please see *Suggested Fee Guide* Calculation Of Fees for further information.)

### **Why does the Association refer to the new fees as “Suggested”?**

The term “Suggested” was deliberately chosen because the ADTO cannot mandate any structured fee schedule for its members. The Board is cognizant that each member is not only a Registered Dental Technologist but also an independent businessperson operating their own professional practice. As such, it is up to each member to decide individually how best to run their practice and charge for their services. The *Suggested Fee Guide* has been developed to assist members in making these important business decisions.

### **When do the fees contained in the *Suggested Fee Guide* come into effect?**

*Dentists Cont'd.*

**June 1, 2001** has been chosen as the official Launch Date for implementation of the *Suggested Fee Guide*. This date was chosen to address a number of different concerns. First, the ADTO wanted to ensure adequate time to undertake a comprehensive communications program to alert members and Ontario's entire dental community about the *Suggested Fee Guide*.

Second, we wanted to allow a member sufficient time to conduct a thorough business analysis of their practice and then evaluate the suggested fees in light of the results of this analysis. Similarly, members will require adequate time to change their existing billing software and procedures to reflect the new fees.

Finally, as a courtesy to members' customers, the Board wanted to provide them sufficient time to prepare their dental practices. Our Launch Date of **June 1, 2001**, we believe, addresses all of the above concerns.

**Does the *Suggested Fee Guide* include all of the usual services and procedures?**

We sincerely hope so. In developing this document, our Fee Guide Committee has made every effort to be as comprehensive as possible. Best efforts were made to identify all of the industry's traditional services and procedures. If, however, there has been an inadvertent omission, the ADTO would appreciate hearing from the industry about the specific service or procedure. Any omission will be included in future editions of the *Suggested Fee Guide*.

In the case of an omission, the Association will endeavor to determine an appropriate fee and communicate that information to all members. If it is not possible to provide a suggested fee, we have recommended to members that they use their best business judgement in establishing a competitive professional fee.

**Is the ADTO's *Suggested Fee Guide* the only one of its kind in Canada?**

*Dentists Cont'd.*

No. Alberta's Registered Dental Technologists also have a suggested fee schedule. Fees in the ADTO's *Guide* are similar to those contained in Alberta's publication.

At present, the ADTO's Board is actively working with other provincial RDT associations to produce a Canadian Suggested Fee Guide.

**Will the Association be communicating information about the *Suggested Fee Guide* to Ontario's non-ADTO members?**

Yes. At present there are approximately 500 Registered Dental Technologists in Ontario. About 98% of these RDTs are ADTO members. As a professional courtesy to those not currently members, we sent a *Suggested Fee Guide Information Package* to them. It was quite similar to the one sent to the ADTO's members.

**Does the ADTO plan annual revisions to the 2001 *Suggested Fee Guide*?**

Yes, but perhaps not in its current format. Producing and distributing the *Suggested Fee Guide* in its current printed format is quite expensive. Based on the members' response to the existing *Guide* the Board will examine other communications alternatives to ensure members receive comprehensive and timely pricing trend information.

**Will the *Suggested Fee Guide's* revised fees affect a patient presently covered under a dental insurance program?**

We do not believe that the *Suggested Fee Guide* will have any effect on insured patients.

**Who do I contact for additional information or if I have a specific question about the *Suggested Fee Guide*?**

We can be reached at: Toll free – 1-877-273-8668 (within Ontario); Telephone (905) 279-1025; Fax (905) 277-9506 or E-mail to [info@adto.org](mailto:info@adto.org).