



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

IFDH welcomes two country members

It is with pleasure that I announce that the IFDH House of Delegates approved two new member countries for associate membership: Malta and the Czech Republic. To be eligible for association membership, the professional dental hygiene association of the country must represent a substantial portion of the qualified registered/licensed dental hygienists in that country and must support the policies of the Federation.

Malta is an island nation consisting of an archipelago of seven islands in the European Union. Malta has a long history of providing publicly funded health care. Dental hygienist is defined in the Malta code of practice as a professional oral health educator and clinical operator who uses scientific methods for the control and prevention of oral disease. The Malta Association of Dental Hygienists is recognized by the Council for the Professions Complementary to Medicine as the professional association representing the profession of dental hygiene in Malta. Currently, there are 15 dental hygienists in Malta and 14 of them are members of their professional organization. There is only one dental hygiene education programme in Malta at the University of Malta. This programme is a 3-year programme offering a bachelor's degree.

The Czech Republic is a landlocked country in Central Europe bordered by Germany, Austria, Slovakia and Poland. This country maintains a welfare system that provides universal health care for its citizens. In this country, dental hygienist is defined as one who can perform preventive oral health education duties without supervision and direction and can perform prophylaxis procedures under the supervision of a dentist. Placement of sealants and applying surface anaesthesia are under the direct guidance of the dentist. The Czech Republic has two dental hygiene programmes at the university level offering a bachelor's degree and six programmes at the college level offering a diploma. There are approximately 386 dental hygienists in this country and 177 of them are members of the Asociace Dentalnich Hygienistek Czech Republic.

With the additions of Malta and the Czech Republic, the IFDH now has 28 member countries. Membership allows dental hygienists to remain connected to each other around the world; to work together to advance the profession and exchange knowledge about the profession, its education and practice; and to improve the health of the public. As association members, Malta and the Czech Republic will provide two representatives to the House of Delegates, the governing body of the IFDH.

In addition to association membership, dental hygienists may join the IFDH as individual or student members. Any dental hygienist who is a member in good standing of a national dental hygienists' association that is an IFDH association member or is a graduate of an accredited minimum 2-year dental hygiene programme may join the IFDH. Entry-level students of an accredited dental hygiene programme of at least 2-years duration can join the IFDH at a reduced fee. Benefits of membership include an annual subscription to the International Journal of Dental Hygiene, IFDH pin, invitations to special events, certificate of IFDH individual membership and networking opportunities with other colleagues.

The IFDH also welcomes other healthcare providers to join as allied supporters. This membership category encourages individuals, institutions, federations, organizations or groups who strive to improve the health of the public and who support the policies of the Federation to be part of our international team of oral health prevention specialists.

Over the course of this term of office, the IFDH welcomes any healthcare provider who wishes to partner to promote awareness of and access to quality health care. To learn more about the IFDH and to join the organization, visit www.ifdh.org and click on the tab 'Become a Member'.

JA Gurenlian, RDH, PhD
E-mail: jargphd@verizon.net

Copyright of International Journal of Dental Hygiene is the property of Wiley-Blackwell and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.