Continuing education is a professional obligation for dentists and dental associations, because of the increase in research in dentistry, the need to incorporate new knowledge on managing oral health and diseases, and emerging public health challenges.

Continuing dental education (CDE) is a professional and ethical obligation for dentists and National Dental Associations. It is the dental professional’s responsibility to continuously learn through education. Every dentist should be informed and involved in the development of dentistry, evaluate new research, apply critical thinking while incorporating new techniques into practice, and serve the public. Career-long professional development improves awareness of appropriate care and strengthens the individual's commitment to public health. The dental profession is committed to maintain high quality, evidence-based, and contemporary education and training standards.

Continuing dental education applies to general dentists and specialists. It promotes an up-to-date status of improved clinical knowledge and skills. CDE is also meant to provide a more public- and patient-focused approach to prevent oral disease, rather than solely treating existing disease. It aims to include the refinement of existing knowledge and skills, as well as the consideration, appropriate evaluation, and application of new developments and scientific research within the scope of dentistry.

CDE assists dentists in recognizing their areas of interest and proficiency level, as well as their limitations, and the need to refer patients for advice and/or treatment to other specialists.

The primary principles of CDE are that the dental profession responds to the public’s changing needs, understands and uses best available practices with new techniques and knowledge, and increases service for the prevention and treatment of oral diseases.
POLICY

FDI calls on National Dental Associations to:

• Regularly update the dental profession’s commitment to preventing diseases, providing appropriate treatment of oral diseases, and promoting public oral health.
• Ensure the availability of a structured and ongoing educational system for all dentists, within an ethical framework.
• Define the nature, content and amount of CDE that is reasonable and attainable by dentists in their region.
• Recommend CDE courses to include medical topics, allowing practicing dentists to upgrade their clinical experience and competency in medical fields.
• Assist the appropriate regulatory agencies in advocating the requirements of CDE.
• Recommend a system capable of regularly evaluating the courses by an audit in terms of quality, content and participation.
• Support a broadened scope of practice and an expanded role for improving the well-being of the community.

This statement should be read in conjunction with FDI’s policy statement on “Basic Dental Education” and the supportive references.

KEYWORDS

Continuing dental education, dental education, educational system, education standards, evaluation and adaptation of new technologies

DISCLAIMER

The information in this Policy Statement was based on the best scientific evidence available at the time. It may be interpreted to reflect prevailing cultural sensitivities and socio-economic constraints.

REFERENCES