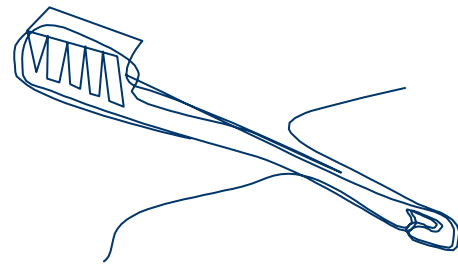


1 CHILDREN'S ORAL HEALTH INITIATIVE (COHI) OVERVIEW



OBJECTIVES

- » Know COHI's goals and objectives.
- » Understand COHI eligibility requirements.
- » Be able to describe COHI services and who can provide them.
- » Know the role of the COHI Aide and other oral health professionals in delivery of COHI services.
- » Be able to describe where COHI services can be delivered in the community.
- » Recognize community partners.

CHILDREN'S ORAL HEALTH INITIATIVE (COHI)

The Children's Oral Health Initiative (COHI) is an early oral health intervention service targeted for First Nations children living on-reserve and eligible Inuit children.

COHI aims to:

- » promote good oral health habits;
- » improve access to preventive oral health care and preventive activities; and
- » promote good general health and eating habits.

COHI was developed based on evidence that:

- » tooth decay is an infectious disease;
- » tooth decay is fully preventable; and
- » early prevention promotes good oral health and less disease.

COHI helps balance the prevention and treatment services offered by the Government of Canada through programs that promote good health habits and dental coverage available through the Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) program.



COHI GOALS

- » Improve children's oral health and contribute to improved overall general health.
- » Teach parents, caregivers, pregnant women and children how to prevent oral disease.
- » Prevent tooth decay in babies and young children.
- » Introduce babies and young children to good oral health practices that are successful, pain-free and fun.

COHI ELIGIBILITY

COHI provides services to:

- » children zero to seven* years of age living on reserve or in Inuit communities;
- » parents, caregivers of these children; and
- » pregnant women.

* The age of the child on September 1st determines eligibility. Children who turn eight within the school year can continue to receive COHI services until the end of the COHI year.

HOW COHI IS DELIVERED

Funded and Coordinated Nationally – Managed Regionally – Delivered Locally

COHI is funded and coordinated through the Government of Canada. The national office sets the program's goals, objectives, standards and develops tools to support its delivery. COHI is managed regionally through COHI coordinators. The ongoing delivery of COHI is the responsibility of the regions and the communities.



The active involvement of community members and other health care providers in the service delivery process is key to COHI's success.

ORAL HEALTH PROVIDERS AND COHI

COHI is delivered by a range of staff. Program coordinators at the national and regional level are federal public servants. Oral health professionals who deliver services are generally Government of Canada employed or funded through contribution agreements and COHI Aides are generally community workers funded through contribution agreements.

Oral health providers include oral health professionals such as dentists, dental therapists, dental hygienists, as well as paraprofessionals such as dental assistants and trained community members (COHI Aides). Community-based staff, such as community health nurses, community health representatives and educators, also support COHI through the promotion of available oral health services within the community. Community-based staff could also have a role to play in its delivery.

COHI Aides or Community Worker Aides

COHI Aides or Community Worker Aides are community members that provide specific COHI services after successfully completing a COHI training program. In communities with a Government of Canada employed professional and a paraprofessional hired by a community through a contribution agreement, the community employer supervises the community employee (i.e., COHI Aide). The Government of Canada employed professional is responsible for ensuring that the COHI protocols are being followed by the community employee when providing COHI services.

DENTAL THERAPY (DT) SERVICES AND COHI

The availability of dental therapy services in a community, complements the delivery of COHI services.

COHI may be a component of dental therapy services or it may be part of a separate program. When integrated, the dental therapist delivers COHI services as part of their routine services, and the COHI Aide's roles and responsibilities would still apply. That means separate authorization/consents may not be required.

Where services are delivered separately, the COHI oral health professional refers clients needing services beyond COHI's scope directly to the DT or dentist.

Separate program authorization/consents are required unless both professionals are employed by the same organization. When both are employed by the same organization, the organization may decide that one form will be used and accessed by both oral health professionals.

When the COHI program is a community's only oral health program, only the services identified within the scope of COHI will be provided.

REGIONAL COHI COORDINATORS' ROLE

Each region has a COHI coordinator. The regional COHI coordinator:

- » directs, supports and monitors COHI in their region;
- » ensures COHI deliverables are achieved;
- » coordinates and delivers training;
- » sets, measures and reviews goals; and
- » ensures Government of Canada communications policy requirements are reflected in public handouts.

COHI ORAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS' ROLE

All oral health screenings, ART or IST and sealants can only be done by oral health professionals. The oral health professionals also:

- » provide information on deliverables and monitor achievement of goals;
- » ensure that the COHI protocols are followed during service delivery;
- » serve as primary contacts for the COHI Aides; and
- » train the COHI Aides to apply fluoride varnish.

Good communication with the COHI Aide is essential and underscores the role of the COHI team in achieving community deliverables.

COHI AIDES' ROLE

COHI Aides are members of the community who:

- » liaise with the community to support oral health prevention services;
- » promote good oral health habits;
- » are trained and qualified to provide some Government of Canada COHI services;
- » provide administrative, promotional and general support;
- » apply fluoride varnish according to protocol; and
- » support oral health professionals who provide COHI services.

(See Section 1 - CS1 Tab for the Role of the COHI Aide.)

COHI SERVICES

(See Section 5 – CP5 Tab for details on COHI standards of service delivery.)

1. ORAL HEALTH SCREENING

An oral health professional looks in the child's mouth to:

- » record tooth decay, missing or filled teeth;
- » assess need for sealants; and
- » determine if the child needs to be referred for dental treatment.

All children are recommended a minimum of two fluoride varnish applications per year.

COHI Aide Role

- » Find and book an appropriate location for screening activities by the oral health professional to occur.
- » Obtain authorization of parents/caregivers permitting an oral health professional to conduct screenings. (See Section 3 - Forms 3 Tab for a sample authorization form.)
- » Record screening results.

2. FLUORIDE VARNISH APPLICATIONS

- » Fluoride varnish helps stop tooth decay and strengthens the tooth. It is applied on all the visible surfaces of the teeth to protect and strengthen them.

COHI Aide Role

- » Following successful completion the COHI training, COHI Aides are able to apply fluoride varnish according to protocol.

3. APPLYING SEALANTS

Sealants are thin, clear or white, plastic coatings placed on the pits and fissures of teeth to help prevent tooth decay. COHI recommends sealants be placed on the first permanent molars. If time permits, they are applied to primary teeth, as needed.

COHI Aide Role

- » Book and arrange space to enable an oral health professional to apply sealants.
- » Set up appointments during a set time period.
- » Coordinate required authorizations. (See Section 3 - Forms 3 Tab for a sample authorization form.)
- » Keep records of activities undertaken during the session.

4. ALTERNATIVE RESTORATIVE TREATMENT (ART) OR INTERIM STABILISATION THERAPY (IST)

ART is a simple and painless way of removing the decay in a tooth. After the decay is removed, the space within the tooth is filled with a glass ionomer, a tooth-coloured filling material. ART is a service provided by the Dental Therapist.**

IST is a simple procedure to stabilize the tooth until the client can get to a dentist for permanent treatment. Glass ionomer is also used. IST is a service provided by a Dental Hygienist.*

These procedures do not require local anesthetic (freezing). The glass ionomer filling material contains fluoride to help stop tooth decay and strengthen the tooth. The oral health professional will recommend this treatment based on their assessment.

*If authorized and legal in the province of practicing professional.

**The dental therapist practice in certain provinces. ART cannot be performed in Quebec and in Ontario.

COHI Aide Role

- » Book and arrange space to enable an oral health professional to meet with children and apply ART or IST according to protocol.
- » Set up appointments during a set time period.
- » Coordinate required authorizations. (See Section 3 - Forms 3 Tab for a sample authorization form.)
- » Keep records of activities undertaken during the session.

5. ORAL HEALTH INFORMATION SESSIONS

Information sessions are provided to parents/caregivers and pregnant women to promote good oral health, healthy eating and general health habits.

COHI Aide Role

- » Book and arrange space to accommodate an information session.
- » Promote the activity among community members to encourage their participation.
- » Deliver the information session and respond to questions.
- » Provide information sheets as hand-outs on tips for good oral health. (See Section 6 - CS6, KM6, AS6 and CR6 Tabs for details.)
- » Undertake one-on-one home visits to discuss oral health issues with parents/caregivers and pregnant women to explain services available and the value of good oral health.

FACILITIES WHERE COHI SERVICES CAN BE DELIVERED/PROVIDED

- » nursing stations
- » health centres
- » Aboriginal Head Start program facility
- » schools
- » daycare centres
- » community centres
- » health clinics/facilities
- » immunization clinics
- » clients' homes
- » health fairs
- » dental clinics