

# Brushing Up on Mouth Care:

Facilitating uptake of a daily oral care program in continuing care



**This knowledge translation (KT) project follows from outcomes and KT activities arising from the Oral Care in Continuing Care Settings: Collaborating to improve policies and practices (2008-2012) study funded through the Nova Scotia Health Research Foundation.**

**PURPOSE:** To translate the knowledge we have gained in the Oral Care in Continuing Care Settings project in order to facilitate uptake of the “Brushing Up on Mouth Care” resources in other relevant settings.

## How were these oral health resources developed?

The ‘Oral Care in Continuing Care Settings’ project engaged personal care providers, nurse managers and directors of care to develop, implement and evaluate a comprehensive daily oral care program in three long-term care facilities and an adult day hospital in rural Nova Scotia. Outputs included relevant, user friendly and accessible resources (print, video and web-based materials) to educate and support the range of unregulated personal care providers (i.e. personal care workers, residential care aides and continuing care assistants) who provide personal care for dependent older adults. **This comprehensive hands-on educational resource package was titled “Brushing Up on Mouth Care”** and is detailed at [www.ahprc.dal.ca/projects/oral-care/project-info.asp](http://www.ahprc.dal.ca/projects/oral-care/project-info.asp).

This resource package includes:

- a detailed instruction manual,
- five education videos,
- oral care tool-kits,
- assessment and care planning tools, and
- guidelines for organizationally mapping oral care.

The study involved an extensive network of decision makers and knowledge users across Nova Scotia. More than 30 presentations were made to share findings and showcase the educational resources. As a result, there has been an overwhelming and urgent demand for these resources from across Canada and internationally.



**PROJECT TIMELINE:**  
June 2012 - June 2013



**PROJECT LOCATION:**  
Canada

**FUNDING:**  
\$99,814



**PARTNERS:**

- Faculty of Dentistry, Dalhousie University
- Atlantic Health Promotion Research Centre (AHPRC), Dalhousie University
- Nova Scotia Community College
- Northwood Care Inc. and Northwood Home Care
- The Health Association of Nova Scotia
- Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness
- Continuing Care Branch
- Nova Scotia Department of Seniors
- The Nova Scotia Group of IX Seniors



## PROJECT TEAM

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*“I just had a chance to review the video on seniors oral health with dementia clients. It was the best 36 minutes I have spent. It was very well done...I am looking at rolling out this information to staff...”*

- Debbie Hersey, RN,  
Site Manager, Elk Court

### Where will these oral health resources be shared?

These resources will be shared throughout Nova Scotia with 3 target audiences:

- 1) long-term care facilities,
- 2) home support agencies and
- 3) continuing care assistant education programs.

We will also share our resources nationally by connecting with dental associations, relevant health sectors, and others with a known interest in care for dependent older adults.

### How will these oral health resources be shared?

The “Brushing Up on Mouth Care” resources will be modified to ensure relevance to the three target audiences. A nurse educator will work with the project coordinator and content experts from the research team and the continuing care and education sectors to develop a facilitator’s guide. Based on a **train-the-trainer** approach, the facilitator’s guide will provide an education plan and teaching tools to assist potential facilitators to train care staff about oral care and to how to use the ‘Brushing Up on Mouth Care’ resources to improve oral care.

Physician Leaders and Directors of Care from the Continuing Care sector in Nova Scotia will identify prospective facilitators from within each of the long-term care facilities, home support agencies and Continuing Care Assistant education programs across Nova Scotia.

A nurse educator will lead several train-the-trainer sessions across Nova Scotia. Training sessions will include hands-on demonstrations of proper brushing, flossing, and rinsing techniques, as well as approaches to manage challenging behaviours. These sessions will also be delivered in a **webinar format** for facilitators who are unable to attend a live training session. To enable the sharing of knowledge beyond Nova Scotia, webinar sessions will be available and advertised to a national audience. Finally, this training session will be developed into an **educational video** and posted on the project website along with the facilitator guide and all other ‘Brushing Up on Mouth Care’ materials.



### Why oral health research?

Mouth care is an integral part of personal care, yet daily mouth care is known to be inadequate for those who depend on others to carry out tasks of daily living. Oral health is often given low priority in the long-term care sector. Studies consistently indicate that oral health status amongst dependent older adults is poor. This places them at risk for oral diseases and dysfunction, affects overall health and negatively impacts quality of life, diminishing the pleasures of eating, speaking and social interactions.

*“I find the buy-in and the interest of the CCAs [in the “Brushing Up on Mouth Care” program] to be contagious. We have actually seen a significant improvement in the quality of oral care in the residents. We have also discovered oral problems that had been going unnoticed because of the lack of knowledge.”*

- Georgette Beaulieu,  
Wynn Park Villa

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