



**Abstract Title:** Supporting oral health and caregiving: research, policy and everyday practice

Teanne E.L. MacCallum  
School of Dental Hygiene  
Faculty of Dentistry  
Dalhousie University

Angus Campbell  
Caregivers Nova Scotia  
Association

Maureen Summers  
Healthy Populations  
Institute

Mary McNally  
Faculty of Dentistry  
Dalhousie University

## Background

This community-based collaborative health and wellness-focused initiative follows from research findings and knowledge translation outputs of Nova Scotia's *Brushing Up on Mouth Care (Brushing Up)* project in which a suite of resources, practical tools, guidelines and policy recommendations were developed to respond to the personal oral care needs of those who are dependent (McNally et al, 2012; 2014). Two timely developments are advancing this work in new directions including: 1) a knowledge sharing partnership between researchers and Caregivers Nova Scotia (CNS), a not-for-profit organization that supports over 4000 unpaid Nova Scotian family and friend caregivers and, 2) the 2016 Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness policy *Long Term Care (LTC) Program Requirements: Nursing Home & Residential Care Facilities* that, for the first time, include explicit standards for oral health and daily mouth care.

## Purpose

To address oral care knowledge gaps identified by CNS and to support care providers, administrators, and educators from the continuing care sector to meet the oral care standards set out in the 2016 *LTC Program Requirements*.

## Action

Highlights of the knowledge sharing approach include: activities of the community-based partnership between CNS and interdisciplinary health researchers; outcomes of a stakeholder workshop (with representation from Alzheimer's Society, Arthritis Society, Huntington Society, MS Society, Muscular Dystrophy Atlantic, and Parkinson's Canada) that provided strategies to expand and modify existing *Brushing Up* resources; and outputs of a Dalhousie University Computer Science community outreach education initiative collaborating with the *Brushing Up* team to maximize the usability of existing open-access web-based content and platforms.

## Outcomes

Piloting of *Brushing Up on Mouth Care for Caregivers* education resource with caregivers suggested the need to: 1) enhance resources (particularly in the areas of dementia and disability care); 2) conduct regional workshops; 3) evaluate resource uptake and 4) adapt resources based on feedback. Preliminary web-based frameworks, including three portals (to meet the needs of caregivers, care-providers; and the French audience) vetted through CNS and stakeholder expertise ensure that web-based navigation and evolving content will meet the needs of multiple stakeholder audiences.

## Conclusions

This initiative provides timely support for professional care providers to meet targets for policy standards. Education provided by CNS that reflects best practices brings confidence that optimal oral care is available to the loved ones of family and friend caregivers. Feedback gathered through stakeholders and end-users ensures that caregiver voices contribute to ongoing development of the most suitable education resources.

## References

- McNally, M., Martin-Misener, R., Wyatt, C., McNeil, K., Crowell, S., Matthews, D., & Clovis, J. (2012). Action Planning for Daily Mouth Care in Long-Term Care: The Brushing Up on Mouth Care Project. *Nursing Research and Practice*, 2012, 368356.
- McNally, M., Martin-Misener, R., McNeil, K., Brilliant, M., Moorhouse, P., Crowell, S., . . . Clovis, J. (2015). Implementing oral care practices and policy into long-term care: The brushing up on mouth care project. *Journal of the American Medical Directors Association*, 16(3), 200-207. doi:10.1016/j.jamda.2014.08.018

## Cite this document in APA:

- MacCallum, T. E., Campbell, A., Summers, M., & McNally, M. (2018, September). *Supporting oral health and caregiving: research, policy and everyday practice*. Paper presented at the Healthy Living, Healthy Life: Collaborative Health Conference on Research, Practice and Community Innovations Conference, Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS. Retrieved from <https://ojs.library.dal.ca/HLHL/>

CC BY-NC-SA