

ENTER THE REGIONAL AWARDS OF DISTINCTION FOR DENTAL HYGIENISTS

Sunstar Oral Health, part of Sunstar, a leading global company in the Mouth & Body Care field based in Switzerland, has announced a new edition of the Regional Awards of Distinction for Dental Hygienists, to recognise the work and accomplishments of dental hygienists across Europe and North America who have made a significant contribution to the dental hygiene field.

The two regional Awards of Distinction are now open for entries from qualified dental hygienists until 31 March 2024 for the North American Award, and 15 April 2024 for the European Award. Created in partnership with the European Dental Hygienist Federation (EDHF) in Europe, *RDH Magazine* for North America and supported by the Sunstar Foundation, the separate European and North American Awards of Distinction celebrate the achievements of dental hygienists in their different regions.

Hygienists looking to enter either the European or North American Awards of Distinction can either nominate themselves or a colleague, as long as they, or the person they are nominating, are officially registered

dental hygienists. Both awards are split into six categories from which the nominee can choose: Public Health, Full Time Clinician, Academia, Entrepreneur, New RDH and Research.

Both the European and the North American Awards of Distinction act as qualifying rounds for the World Dental Hygienists Award (WDHA). First established in 2007, the World Dental Hygienists Award was re-introduced last year following a three-year hiatus during the COVID pandemic. The 2024 WDHA winners will be announced in July during the International Symposium on Dental Hygiene celebrated in Seoul, and the new edition will begin in January 2025.

Gitana Rederiene, president of the European Dental Hygienist Federation, said: 'We have been very impressed by the standard of nominations received for the 2023 awards European Award of Distinction, and the EDHF is delighted to continue our involvement in the 2024 edition together with Sunstar.'

Jackie Sanders, RDH, MBA, Chief Editor of *RDH Magazine* said: 'We have seen how



the Sunstar/RDH Award of Distinction has become the annual celebration of dental hygienists, and we are extremely proud to have built this along with Sunstar over the years.'

All nominations across the six categories of both the European and North American Awards of Distinction will be judged by independent selection committees. Each winner will automatically qualify for the WDHA and have the opportunity to win the global award and travel to Milan, where the International Symposium on Dental Hygiene (ISDH) and the World Dental Hygienist Award ceremony will be held in 2026.

Dental hygienists can find more information along with details of the prizes for the European Award of Distinction at: <https://www.sunstar-foundation.org/en/awards/award-of-distinction-dental-hygienists>.

For more on the World Dental Hygienist Awards visit: <https://www.sunstar-foundation.org/en/awards/world-hygienist>.

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Mobile clinics bring dental care to people who are homeless



Community dental provider, CDS CIC has been piloting a treatment programme for people with Severe Multiple Disadvantage (SMD) and/or homelessness. The pilot is a partnership between CDS and the East Midlands Primary Care Team, working on behalf of five Integrated Care Boards in the Midlands.

The CDS Mobile Dental Clinic has

been visiting locations in Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Lincolnshire that offer established services for people who are homeless. Patients are supported to attend appointments in an environment they are familiar with for check-ups and follow-up treatment.

People experiencing SMD and homelessness face many barriers to accessing oral health care and experience higher levels of dental caries and periodontal disease than the general population. Poor oral health is linked to a decreased quality of life among these patients, compounding issues such as poor diet and substance misuse to alleviate pain. Thirty-six percent of people who are homeless have accessed A&E services due to oral health related pain. People who are homeless can often feel ashamed and embarrassed to attend a dental practice full of people, fearing that they will be judged as well as facing difficulty finding and registering with a dentist without a fixed address.

The pilot been specifically designed around the needs of this patient group, with the mobile dental clinic attending places they are already familiar with and trust.

Nicola Milner, Chief Operating Officer for CDS in the Midlands, said: 'We worked closely with people who support this group of patients, and we are becoming known and trusted. It is fantastic that we can provide a positive experience for patients who may not have had good experiences accessing dental care before and to relieve their pain and embarrassment associated with their teeth.'

So far, the mobile clinic has seen 145 patients at twice weekly sessions which are also an opportunity to signpost to other services, such as smoking cessation and drug and alcohol support. The mobile clinic is equipped to provide a full range of dental treatment. Feedback from patients has been overwhelmingly positive:

The pilot began in June and is set to continue for 12 months.