**PROPOSED RESOLUTION: 4**

**Proposed By:** IDHA Delegation

**RESOLUTION:** That IDHA adopt the following policy:

The Illinois Dental Hygienists’ Association supports and advocates for doctoral degrees in dental hygiene.

**Justification:**  National efforts to create the first doctoral degree program in dental hygiene have been in progress since 2005 when ADHA published *Dental Hygiene: Focus on Advancing the Profession*. At that time, goals were developed to create a doctoral degree program in dental hygiene within 20 years and to develop curricular models for both a professional (Doctor of Science in dental hygiene) and academic (Doctor of Philosophy) doctoral programs in dental hygiene. Since that time, both the Doctoral Degree in Dental Hygiene (practitioner based) and the PhD (academic based) program options have been created and published in professional journals. Research has shown that dental hygiene practitioners, students and faculty desire these degrees to expand clinical practice opportunities, to become better educators and researchers, to engage in administrative roles in health care organizations, to lead the development of theory and disseminate knowledge unique to the discipline of dental hygiene, and to increase earning potential. Other health professions such as pharmacy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, physician assistants, and nursing have redefined their educational pathways and created doctoral degrees in their respective disciplines. Dental hygiene now has multiple BSDH and MSDH education programs in the United States. Pursuing the DDH and PhD in dental hygiene is warranted, and it is important to have policy that supports this effort.