

BridgeYear Adds Dental Hygienist to Career Test Drive® Fair Lineup

New hands-on simulation gives Houston high schoolers a firsthand look at a high-growth healthcare career paying approximately \$98,479 a year.

HOUSTON, TX, UNITED STATES, August 14, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- BridgeYear, a Houston nonprofit connecting underserved youth to careers and educational pathways that build economic stability, today announced Dental Hygienist as the newest addition to its [Career Test Drive® Fair](#) lineup. The hands-on simulation will give Houston-area students a firsthand look at one of the fastest-growing careers in healthcare, without stepping foot in a college classroom.

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We develop each experience alongside industry subject-matter experts so students are exploring authentic, real-world scenarios that reflect what today's workforce actually looks like.

Victoria Chen

BridgeYear's Career Simulation The Career Test Drive® Program places real job tasks directly in front of students on their own school campuses. Instead of reading about a career, students try it: taking

blood pressure readings as a phlebotomist simulation, troubleshooting a vehicle as an automotive technician, or, now, examining a model patient's teeth as a dental hygienist. The program is sponsored by employer partners, and is a core part of BridgeYear's mission to show students that a four-year degree is not the only route to a [living-wage career](#).

Dental Hygienist Career Pathway

Dental hygiene was selected for its strong earning potential and long-term demand. Professionals in the field earn an average annual salary of approximately \$98,479 in Texas, and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics-informed outlook projects 9% employment growth with an average of 257 annual openings statewide through 2031.

“Every Career Test Drive® simulation we build is chosen deliberately, because it offers students a real pathway to a living wage and greater economic mobility,” said Victoria Chen, Co-Founder and Executive Director of BridgeYear. “Adding dental hygiene lets us open the door to healthcare careers with strong earning potential and long-term opportunity for even more students.”

The addition comes as BridgeYear expands its healthcare career offerings within the Career Test

Drive® Program, building on existing employer partnerships in the medical field. Each simulation is developed in collaboration with subject-matter experts to ensure the tasks students perform mirror the real expectations of the job, not a simplified version of it.

The dental hygienist simulation will roll out to participating Houston-area school campuses as part of upcoming Career Test Drive® Fair dates. Schools and employer partners interested in bringing Career Test Drive® Fair to their campus, or sponsoring a future simulation, can learn more at bridgeyear.org/schools/ctd/.

About BridgeYear

BridgeYear is a [Houston-based nonprofit](#) founded in 2016, celebrating a decade of connecting underserved youth to careers and educational pathways that provide economic stability and independence. Through programs including Career Test Drive®, MorePathways®, and Career Cohorts, BridgeYear partners with schools, employers, and community organizations across Houston to show students that a four-year degree is not the only route to a high-demand, living-wage career. Learn more at bridgeyear.org.

Media Contact

Jocelyne Trevino

Senior Communications Manager, BridgeYear

Victoria Chen

BridgeYear

+1 832-579-0294

[email us here](#)

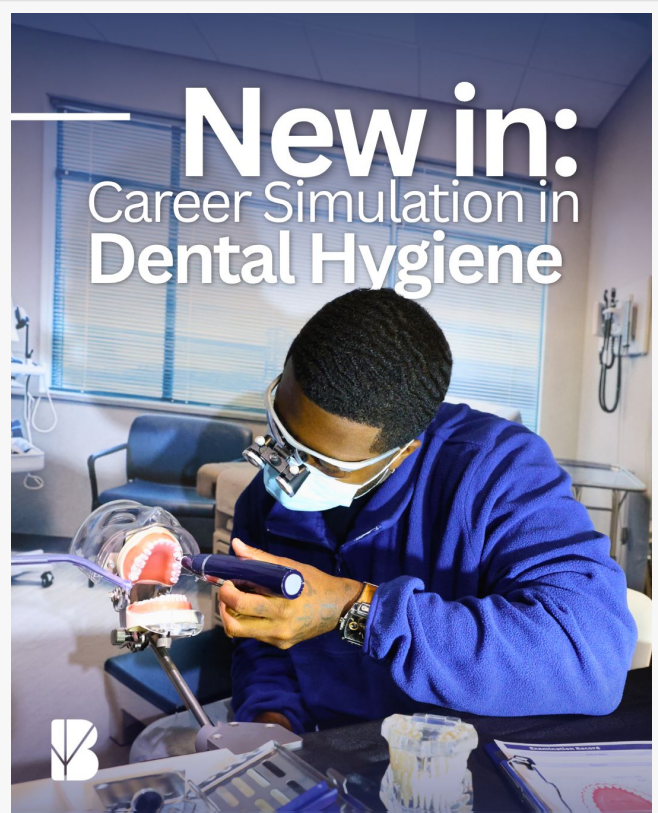
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dental hygiene

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