

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## SSB 5322

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C 37 L 97

Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Removing regulatory barriers to the provision of oral health care services to rural, remote, and underserved populations.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Deccio, Thibaudeau and Kohl).

**Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care**  
**House Committee on Health Care**

**Background:** Currently, dental hygienists perform duties within their scope of practice under the supervision of a dentist. Current restrictions in statute prohibit more than two dental hygienists to practice under the supervision of one dentist.

Dental hygienists may perform specific duties without dental supervision under specific conditions defined in statute. One of these conditions is that the services be provided in local public health facilities. Practitioners have expressed concern that settings which fit into this category should be better defined.

Dental hygienists who come to Washington State from another state may receive a temporary license for 18 months without examination while they fulfill the requirements of licensure in this state. This program of offering temporary licensure terminates on January 1, 1998, unless there is a change in statute.

**Summary:** The current ratio of dentists to dental hygienists permitted in an office setting is eliminated.

Public health facilities are clarified under the independent practice section of the hygiene statute to include state or federally-funded community and migrant health centers, and tribal clinics.

The January 1, 1998 termination date for the dental hygienist temporary licensure program is removed.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

Senate	49 0
House	95 1

**Effective:** July 27, 1997