

---

HOUSE BILL 1917

---

State of Washington                      55th Legislature                      1997 Regular Session

By Representatives Skinner, Murray, Thompson and Cody

Read first time 02/13/97. Referred to Committee on Health Care.

1            AN ACT Relating to the certification of public health dental  
2 hygienists practicing among underserved populations; adding new  
3 sections to chapter 18.29 RCW; creating a new section; and providing an  
4 expiration date.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6            NEW SECTION.        **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that access to  
7 preventive and restorative oral health services by low-income families  
8 and eligible medicaid children is currently restricted by complex  
9 regulatory, financial, cultural, and geographic barriers that have  
10 resulted in a large number of children suffering unnecessarily from  
11 dental disease. The legislature also finds that very early exposure to  
12 oral health care can significantly reduce the incidence of dental  
13 disease and reverse it in many cases, thereby significantly reducing  
14 costs of providing dental services to low-income populations.

15            It is the intent of the legislature to provide access to oral  
16 health care services to medicaid eligible and low-income families and  
17 children and other dentally underserved populations by addressing some  
18 identified barriers.

1        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 2.**    (1) A dental hygienist licensed under this  
2 chapter may apply for certification by the department as a public  
3 health dental hygienist upon:

4        (a) Attainment of a baccalaureate degree in dental hygiene from an  
5 accredited school or degree completion program in higher education  
6 recognized by the secretary of health;

7        (b) Completion of the approved educational program developed under  
8 section 4 of this act;

9        (c) Establishment and maintenance of an acceptable practice  
10 protocol with a licensed dentist developed and approved by the dental  
11 quality assurance commission pursuant to section 3 of this act; and

12        (d) Compliance with administrative procedures, administrative  
13 requirements, and fees determined as provided in RCW 43.70.250 and  
14 43.70.280.

15        (2) Certification as a public health dental hygienist is subject to  
16 the provisions of the uniform disciplinary act, chapter 18.130 RCW, on  
17 the same grounds as a license for practice. However, any action taken  
18 by the secretary with regard to certification as a public health dental  
19 hygienist does not affect the license to practice, unless there is a  
20 separate action taken with regard to the license.

21        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 3.**    (1) Dental hygienists certified as public  
22 health dental hygienists under section 2 of this act under an approved  
23 practice protocol developed under subsection (3) of this section may  
24 assess for and apply sealants and fluoride treatments for clients of  
25 community clinics, migrant and community health centers, tribal  
26 clinics, and public health dental programs.

27        (2) A dental hygienist certified under section 2 of this act shall  
28 ensure that each patient for whom the dental hygienist applies sealants  
29 or fluoride treatments has the opportunity to be examined by a dentist  
30 within six to twelve months after the application of the sealant or  
31 fluoride treatment.

32        (3) A dental hygienist certified under section 2 of this act shall  
33 establish a practice arrangement through a practice protocol with one  
34 or more dentists licensed in this state. The practice protocol entered  
35 into by the dental hygienist and a dentist must be signed by both  
36 practitioners, approved by the dental quality assurance commission, and  
37 filed with the secretary.

1        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 4.**    The department of health, in consultation  
2 with the University of Washington school of dentistry and upon approval  
3 of the higher education coordinating board, shall develop an oral  
4 health assessment educational program to be required as additional  
5 training for licensed dental hygienists who apply for a dental  
6 hygienist public health certification.    The course must include a  
7 training on the assessment of teeth and oral tissues among the  
8 underserved for the purpose of planning and administering appropriate  
9 preventive and disease control interventions within the scope of  
10 practice.    The course must include dental caries assessment and  
11 management, current science about the importance of oral hygiene and  
12 the role of fluorides for maintaining proper oral health, oral cancer  
13 detection, and psychosocial conditions and cultural considerations that  
14 impact a family's attitudes and behaviors about seeking dental  
15 services.

16        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 5.**    Sections 1 through 4 of this act are each  
17 added to chapter 18.29 RCW.

18        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 6.**    Sections 1 through 4 of this act expire July  
19 1, 2003.

20        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 7.**    The department of health shall report to the  
21 legislature by December 1, 2002, on the need to continue granting  
22 certification as public health dental hygienists to dental hygienists.  
23 The report shall identify alternatives to certifying public health  
24 dental hygienists that meet the same goals and objectives.

--- END ---