

HB 2816 - DIGEST

Declares an intent to address the problem of access to preventive oral health care services by providing five pilot projects that allow dental hygienists to practice within the current scope of practice without the supervision of a dentist.

Establishes the access to preventive care pilot projects. The secretary of health is authorized to create five pilot projects in dentally underserved areas of the state whereby dental hygienists are authorized to practice within the current scope of practice in RCW 18.29.050, without the supervision of a dentist. These pilot projects are effective for three years after the effective date of this section. The secretary of health, in consultation with the dental hygiene examining committee, shall adopt rules to implement this act.

Declares that the goals of the pilot projects are to: (1) Open access to preventive oral health care services delivered by dental hygienists;

(2) Collect data of patients treated by dental hygienists, including age, treatments rendered, insurance coverage, if any, and patient referral to dentists;

(3) Evaluate independently managed dental hygiene practices in increasing the patient flow to dentists, thereby improving dental care; and

(4) Examine the ways in which the pilot projects affect access to preventive oral health care for underserved persons.

Directs the secretary of health, in consultation with the Washington state dental hygienists' association, to provide a report to the legislature by December 1, 2009, evaluating the outcome of the pilot projects.