
**Health Care & Wellness
Committee**

HB 1099

Brief Description: Regulating certain dental professions.

Sponsors: Representatives Cody, Hinkle, Green, Bailey, Schual-Berke, Campbell, McCoy, Morrell, Ormsby, Kenney and Moeller.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes dental assistants and expanded function dental auxiliaries as new health professions to be regulated by the Dental Quality Assurance Commission.

Hearing Date: 1/18/07

Staff: Chris Blake (786-7392).

Background:

Dentists may allow unlicensed individuals to perform certain dental care functions when supervised by a dentist. The Dental Quality Assurance Commission has adopted rules to define the scope of services that these unlicensed personnel may provide and the level of supervision necessary. The services they may provide under the close supervision of a dentist generally include performing oral inspections, providing patient education, conducting certain duties related to impressions, performing coronal polishing, placing temporary fillings, placing topical anesthetics, placing and exposing dental x-ray film, applying sealants, and assisting in the administration of nitrous oxide analgesia or sedation.

These unlicensed dental personnel may be trained through on the job experience or they may be trained through a dental assistant education program. Nationally there are approximately 265 dental assisting training programs approved by the American Dental Association's Commission on Dental Accreditation. As of 2004, Washington had the second highest number of dental assistants per dentist in the nation.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

In January 2004, the Department of Health issued a sunrise review that recommended the registration of dental assistants.

Summary of Bill:

Dental assistants are defined as individuals who provide supportive services to dentists under the close supervision of a dentist. "Close supervision" requires that a supervising dentist be present at the treatment facility while procedures are being performed and able to respond to an emergency, however, it does not require the supervising dentist to be physically present in the operatory. Dental assistants may perform patient care and laboratory duties as defined by the Dental Quality Assurance Commission (Commission). A dental assistant must demonstrate to a dentist that he or she is capable of competently performing any assigned services.

Dental assistants are required to be registered by the Commission. The Commission shall issue a registration to any individual who submits an application and pays the appropriate fee.

Expanded function dental auxiliaries are defined as individuals who provide supportive services to dentists under either close or general supervision of a dentist. "General supervision" requires that a supervising dentist have examined and diagnosed the patient, however, it does not require the dentist to be physically present in the treatment facility. In addition to the duties that a dental assistant may perform under close supervision, an expanded function dental auxiliary may perform certain dental assistant functions under general supervision, including performing coronal polishing, giving fluoride treatments, applying sealants, placing and exposing x-ray film, and giving patient oral health instruction. In addition, an expanded function dental auxiliary may place and carve direct restorations and take final impressions under close supervision. An expanded function dental auxiliary must demonstrate to a dentist that he or she is capable of competently performing any assigned services.

Expanded function dental auxiliaries are required to be licensed by the Commission. The Commission shall issue a license to any individual who (1) submits an application; (2) pays the appropriate fee; (3) completes a dental assisting education program; (4) completes an expanded function dental auxiliary education program; and (5) passes both a written and clinical examination.

A licensed dental hygienist who applies for a license to practice as an expanded function dental auxiliaries shall be considered to have met the requirement to complete a dental assisting education program. Upon obtaining a license to practice as an expanded function dental auxiliary, a dental hygienist may perform the additional duties provided by an expanded function dental auxiliary.

Supervising dentists are responsible for maintaining the appropriate level of supervision over dental assistants and expanded function dental auxiliaries and ensuring that those personnel are able to competently perform their tasks.

Two expanded function dental auxiliaries are added to the Commission.

By November 15, 2012, the Department of Health, in consultation with the Commission and the Dental Hygiene Examining Committee, shall review the effectiveness of the dental assistant and expanded function dental auxiliary professions as related to increasing professional standards, increasing efficiency in dental practices and community clinics, and promoting career ladders in

the dental professions. In addition, the review shall make any recommendation for adjusting the practices of dental assistants and expanded function dental auxiliaries.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed, except for section 16 relating to the membership of the Commission which takes effect July 1, 2008.