

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5606

As Passed House:
April 9, 2015

Title: An act relating to regulating dental professionals by permitting dental hygienists and dental assistants to take impressions under certain circumstances and by authorizing the issuance of a limited license to dental hygienists who actively practice or are licensed in Canada.

Brief Description: Modifying provisions related to licensing and scope of practice for dental professionals.

Sponsors: Senators Jayapal, Rivers, Frockt, King, Keiser and Kohl-Welles.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care & Wellness: 3/20/15, 3/26/15 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 4/9/15, 97-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows dental hygienists and dental assistants to take impressions.
- Makes dental hygienists licensed in Canada eligible for limited dental hygienist licenses.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE & WELLNESS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 14 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Riccelli, Vice Chair; Schmick, Ranking Minority Member; Harris, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Caldier, Clibborn, Jinkins, Johnson, Moeller, Robinson, Rodne, Short, Tharinger and Van De Wege.

Staff: Jim Morishima (786-7191).

Background:

I. Dental Hygienists.

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.

A. In General.

Licensed dental hygienists may remove deposits and stains from the surfaces of teeth, apply topical preventive or prophylactic agents, polish and smooth restorations, perform root planing and soft tissue curettage, and other operations and services delegated to them by a dentist. In order to be licensed, dental hygienists must complete an educational program, pass an examination, and fulfill continuing education requirements.

B. Limited Licenses.

A person may be granted a limited dental hygienist license if he or she:

- is licensed and has actively practiced for at least 560 hours in the preceding 24 months;
- has graduated from an accredited dental hygiene school;
- has completed the dental hygiene national board examination;
- provides information pertaining to the conditions and criteria in the Uniform Disciplinary Act;
- demonstrates knowledge of Washington law pertaining to the practice of dental hygiene; and
- meets AIDS education requirements.

A holder of an initial limited dental hygienist license may perform the following procedures:

- oral inspection and the measuring of periodontal pockets;
- patient education in oral hygiene;
- taking intra-oral and extra-oral radiographs;
- applying topical preventive or prophylactic agents;
- polishing and smoothing restorations;
- oral prophylaxis and removing of deposits and stains from the surfaces of teeth;
- recording health histories;
- taking and recording blood pressure and vital signs;
- performing subgingival and supragingival scaling; and
- performing root planing.

An initial limited dental hygienist license expires after 18 months and may be renewed only if the applicant passes a dental hygiene patient evaluation/prophylaxis examination, passes a local anesthesia examination, and demonstrates didactic and clinical competency in the administration of nitrous oxide analgesia. In addition to the procedures authorized for initial licensees, a holder of a renewed limited dental hygienist license may:

- give injections of local anesthetic;
- perform soft tissue curettage; and
- administer nitrous oxide/analgesia.

If the holder of a limited licensee can show substantively equivalent licensing standards, he or she may be issued a temporary endorsement to administer local anesthesia or perform restorative procedures.

II. Dental Assistants.

Dental assistants must register with the Dental Quality Assurance Commission (DQAC) and may perform patient care and laboratory duties as authorized by the DQAC in rule. Dental Assistants may not perform:

- scaling procedures;
- oral prophylaxis, except coronal polishing;
- administration of general or local anesthetic;
- removal of, or addition to, the hard or soft tissue of the oral cavity;
- diagnosis of, or prescription for, the treatment of disease, pain, deformity, deficiency, injury, or physical condition of the teeth, jaw, or adjacent structures; or
- the taking of impressions of the teeth or jaw for purpose of fabricating any intra-oral restoration, appliance, or prosthesis.

Summary of Bill:

I. Dental Hygienists.

A. In General.

A dental hygienist may take an impression for any purpose allowed for a dental assistant or as a delegated duty pursuant to rules adopted by the DQAC.

B. Limited Licenses.

Dental hygienists from Canadian provinces are eligible for limited dental hygienist licenses.

II. Dental Assistants.

Dental assistants may take impressions allowed as a delegated duty pursuant to rules adopted by the DQAC.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill is a technical fix to align statutes with administrative rules. The bill allows dental hygienists and dental assistants to take impressions according to rules adopted by the DQAC. The bill also is a technical fix for dental hygienists from Canada while they await taking the examination.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Marilyn Rothen and Anne Burkland, Washington State Dental Hygienist Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.