
Health Care & Wellness Committee

HB 1554

Brief Description: Concerning dental hygienists.

Sponsors: Representatives Thai, Harris, Robinson, Stonier, Appleton, Gregerson, Jinkins, Slatter and Macri.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows the holder of an initial limited license to practice dental hygiene to obtain a temporary endorsement to administer nitrous oxide analgesia.
- Requires the holder of a limited license to practice dental hygiene to complete education on the administration of local anesthesia and nitrous oxide analgesia in order to renew his or her limited license.
- Adds a member to the Dental Hygiene Examining Committee.

Hearing Date: 2/13/19

Staff: Jim Morishima (786-7191).

Background:

I. Licensing of Dental Hygienists.

A dental hygienist 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. Generally, dental hygienists must be supervised by a licensed dentist. In order to be licensed, dental hygienists must complete an educational program, and pass an examination approved by the Dental Hygiene Examining Committee, which consists of three practicing dental hygienists and one public member.

II. Initial Limited Licenses.

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 dental hygienist licensed and practicing in another state or a Canadian province may be temporarily licensed without examination if he or she provides the Department of Health (DOH) with certain documentation and information, demonstrates a knowledge of Washington law pertaining to the practice of dental hygiene, pays required fees, and meets requirements for AIDS education. The procedures a dental hygienist with an initial limited license may perform are limited, although the holder of an initial limited license may obtain endorsements for local anesthesia and restorative procedures.

The initial limited license lasts 18 months and may be renewed if the applicant demonstrates:

- successful passage of a substantively equivalent dental hygiene patient evaluation/prophylaxis examination;
- successful passage of a substantively equivalent local anesthesia examination; and
- didactic and clinical competency in the administration of nitrous oxide analgesia.

A dental hygienist with a renewed limited license may additionally give injections of local anesthetic, perform soft tissue curettage, and administer nitrous oxide/oxygen analgesia.

III. Community-Based Sealant Programs.

A licensed dental hygienist may assess for and apply sealants and fluoride varnishes and remove deposits and stains from the surfaces of teeth, for low-income, rural, and other at-risk populations in community-based sealant programs carried out in schools. A dental hygienist participating in a community-based sealant program must either have been licensed prior to April 19, 2001, or be school-sealant endorsed under the DOH's School Sealant Endorsement Program.

Summary of Bill:

I. Licensing of Dental Hygienists.

One practicing dental hygienist is added to the Dental Hygiene Examining Committee.

II. Initial Limited Licenses.

A person with an initial limited dental hygienist license may receive a temporary endorsement to administer nitrous oxide analgesia if he or she can demonstrate substantively equivalent licensing standards in administering nitrous oxide analgesia in the other state or Canadian province where he or she is licensed.

The requirements to renew a limited license are expanded to include the successful passage of an educational program on the administration of local anesthesia and nitrous oxide analgesia.

III. Community-Based Sealant Programs.

A dental hygienist in a community-based sealant program may apply fluoride, as opposed to fluoride varnishes.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 6, 2019.

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