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EXPAND DENTAL HYGIENISTS' AND ASSISTANTS' SCOPE OF PRACTICE

House Bill 4356
Sponsor: Rep. Barb Vander Veen
Committee: Health Policy

Complete to 3-21-03

A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 4356 AS INTRODUCED 3-18-03

House Bill 4356 would amend the Public Health Code to expand dental hygienists' scope of practice to include taking dental impressions for certain purposes, and to expand dental assistants' scope of practice to include various procedures performed under a dentist's "direct" or "general supervision". A more detailed summary of the bill is provided below.

Dental hygienists' scope of practice. The bill would allow a dental hygienist, upon "assignment" by a dentist, to take impressions for orthodontic appliances, mouth guards, bite splints, and bleaching trays. (As defined in the code, "assignment" by a dentist means that a dentist has described specific procedures to be performed on a given patient.)

Dental assistants' scope of practice. The bill would allow a registered dental assistant, upon delegation by a dentist and under a dentist's "direct supervision", to place, condense, and carve amalgam restorations and take final impressions for indirect restorations. (As defined in the code, "direct supervision" by a dentist means that a dentist describes the specific procedures to be performed on a given patient, examines the patient both before prescribing the procedures and after the procedures have been performed, and remains physically present in the office while the procedures are being performed.)

In addition, the bill would allow a registered dental assistant, upon delegation by a dentist and under a dentist's "general supervision" to perform the following intra-oral dental procedures: pulp vitality testing; placing and removing matrices and wedges; applying cavity liners and bases; placing and packing nonepinephrine retractions cords; applying desensitizing agents; taking impressions for orthodontic appliances, mouth guards, bite splints, and bleaching trays; drying endodontic canals with absorbent points; and etching and placing adhesives prior to placement of orthodontic brackets. The bill would add a definition of "general supervision" to the code, which would mean that a dentist described specific procedures to be performed on a given patient and was physically present in the office while the procedures were being performed. (The dentist would not have to examine the patient before prescribing the procedures or after the procedures had been performed.)

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