

The 2009 Legislative Session passed a bill designed to expand the scope of practice for hygienists and dental assistants under general supervision of a dentist.

Section 8 of the Board of Dental Examiners Rule 5CSR1 was modified to allow for the expansion of auxiliary duties, allowing for general supervision and public health practice to continue in West Virginia. This expansion was initially permitted in July 2008 under the WVBODE emergency rule, but was set to expire in October of 2009. The bill allows both practices to continue permanently. This bill allows a RDH to perform the services they are trained to do, by themselves with the general supervision of a dentist, so long as the RDH and dentist have drafted a “collaborative agreement.” The Rule requires dentists and hygienists to work together to create such a collaborative, so that the hygienist may work in the public.

An outline of the new provisions that were added to Section 8 is as follows:

- Subsection 8.2.gg -- Allowing coronal polishing on children by trained *assistants* who have completed 2 years and at least 3,000 hours of clinical experience in a dentist office;
- Subsection 8.4. -- General supervision (dentist does not need to be in the office or treatment facility) of dental hygienist; however the hygienist must apply for a permit to practice under general supervision or public health practice, and receive a certificate from the Board before engaging in such practices. A dental hygienist may practice under general supervision no more than fifteen consecutive business days. Procedures that may be performed when practicing under general supervision:
 - Record health histories
 - Radiographs
 - Chart
 - Take impressions
 - Apply sealants
 - Apply topical anesthetic agents
 - Apply topic anticariogenic agents
 - Check and remove loose bands or brackets

- Take intra and extra oral photos
 - Complete dental prophylaxis
 - Dental health education
 - Nutritional counseling
 - Examine and record periodontal findings
 - Scale excessive cement from surfaces of teeth and restorations
 - Perform clinical examinations and diagnostic tests of teeth and surrounding tissues, including but not limited to restorative chartings, caries activity test, cytology smears, salivary analysis and smears, endodontic cultures, vitality tests, and recording findings for interpretation by a supervising dentist
 - Place of subgingival medicaments, fibers, chips, etc.
 - Finish and polish restorations with a slow speed hand piece
 - Debridement and /or root planing of teeth
 - Apply bleaching agents after completion of board-approved course.
- Subsection 8.5. -- Procedures allowed by a hygienist with no supervision by a dentist; Include: dental health education, nutritional counseling, and preparing generalized oral screening with subsequent referral to dentist, applying fluoride.