

DH Focus

The Illinois State Dental Society Newsletter for Dental Hygienists Three Years Later – Still Waiting for IDFPR Rules for Public Health Dental Hygienist

In January 2015, Illinois State Dental Society (ISDS) introduced [HB500](#) and after three House amendments and five Senate amendments, the final bill created a new “public health dental hygienist (PHRDH).” Gov. Rauner signed the bill into law on December 17, 2015 as [Public Act 99-0492](#).

The new law laid out the framework for the PHRDH that would allow Illinois licensed dental hygienists that worked in a public health setting, and with specific additional training, to provide currently permissible treatment to patients without a dentist first examining the patient and being present in the treatment facility. Services allowed to be provided to Medicaid eligible or low-income patients included oral assessments, screenings, the application of fluoride and sealants and prophylaxis.

ISDS felt that this new type of dental hygienist would be able to extend the reach of the supervising dentist by utilizing already existing, properly trained members of the dental team, thereby increasing the access to dental services by these needy populations.

The law was originally established with a repeal date of January 1, 2021, so that all interested parties could focus on getting this position off the ground and allow time to evaluate its impact on access. The current challenge is getting the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR) to draft and formally propose the administrative rules to manage the requirements. As of mid-October, IDFPR has yet to promulgate and publish them in the [Illinois Register](#) and with the [Joint Committee on Administrative Rules \(JCAR\)](#).

As this bill was working through the legislative process in 2015, ISDS sought to get as much specificity written into the legislation as possible to avoid the rulemaking barrier. Other concerned parties wanted IDFPR and the State Board of Dentistry to weigh in and allow the rulemaking to craft the final requirements.

ISDS was forward thinking in working to advance the profession of dental hygiene with a full understanding of the legislative process. ISDS will continue to wade through this regulatory morass so that the entire dental team can continue to provide safe and effective dental treatment to patients in Illinois.