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*General Supervision of Dental Hygienist Law
- a Summary -
Prepared by the Illinois State Dental Society*

The Dental Practice Act allows a dental hygienist in a dental office to perform procedures, under general supervision, if the dentist and dental hygienist meet the provisions listed below.

Please read the following guidelines closely so that you will be in compliance with the new provisions.

(25/4 General Supervision) – Definitions

“General supervision” means supervision of a dental hygienist requiring that the patient be a patient of record, that the dentist examine the patient in accordance with Section 18 prior to treatment by the dental hygienist, and that the dentist authorize the procedures which are being carried out by a notation in the patient’s record, but not requiring that a dentist be present when the authorized procedures are being performed.

“Patient of record” means a patient for whom the patient’s most recent dentist has obtained a relevant medical and dental history and on whom the dentist has performed an examination and evaluated the condition to be treated.

(25/18. Acts constituting the practice of dental hygiene - Limitations)

In-Office Practice Settings:

When employed or engaged in the office of a dentist, a dental hygienist may perform, under general supervision:

- (i) the operative procedure of dental hygiene, consisting of oral prophylactic procedures;
- (ii) the exposure and processing of X-Ray films of the teeth and surrounding structures;
- (iii) the application to the surfaces of the teeth or gums of chemical compounds designed to be desensitizing agents or effective agents in the prevention of dental caries or periodontal disease;
- (iv) all services which may be performed by a dental assistant;

provided the patient has been examined by the dentist within one year of the provision of dental hygiene services, the dentist has approved the dental hygiene services by a notation in the patient’s record and the patient has been notified that the dentist may be out of the office during the provision of dental hygiene services. Administration or monitoring of nitrous oxide or administration of local anesthetics by a dental hygienist are not permitted under general supervision.

Institutional Practice Settings:

If a patient of record is unable to travel to a dental office because of illness, infirmity, or imprisonment, a dental hygienist may perform the above listed services, under the general supervision of a dentist, provided the patient is located in a long-term care facility licensed by the State of Illinois, a mental health or developmental disability facility, or a State or federal prison.

The dentist shall personally examine and diagnose the patient and determine which services are necessary to be performed, which shall be contained in an order to the hygienist and a notation in the patient's record. Such order must be implemented within 120 days of its issuance, and an updated medical history and observation of oral conditions must be performed by the hygienist immediately prior to beginning the procedures to ensure that the patient's health has not changed in any manner to warrant a reexamination by the dentist.

School-Based Program Settings:

School-based oral health care, consisting of and limited to oral prophylactic procedures, sealants, and fluoride treatments, may be provided by a dental hygienist under the general supervision of a dentist. A dental hygienist may not provide other dental hygiene treatment in a school-based setting, including but not limited to administration or monitoring of nitrous oxide or administration of local anesthetics. The school-based procedures may be performed provided the patient is located at a public or private school and the program is being conducted by a State, county or local public health department initiative or in conjunction with a dental school or dental hygiene program. The dentist shall personally examine and diagnose the patient and determine which services are necessary to be performed, which shall be contained in an order to the hygienist and a notation in the patient's record. Any such order for sealants must be implemented within 120 days after its issuance. Any such order for oral prophylactic procedures or fluoride treatments must be implemented within 180 days after its issuance. An updated medical history and observation of oral conditions must be performed by the hygienist immediately prior to beginning the procedures to ensure that the patient's health has not changed in any manner to warrant a reexamination by the dentist.

NOTE: The above summary does not include the exact language of the law. It has been summarized in a more readable format. This summary does not constitute legal advice as well.

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