

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5694

AS OF FEBRUARY 27, 1991

Brief Description: Creating two license categories for dental hygienists.

SPONSORS: Senators Wojahn, West and McMullen.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Staff: Scott Plack (786-7409)

Hearing Dates: March 6, 1991

BACKGROUND:

The state regulates dental hygiene under the Dental Hygiene Practice Act (Chapter 18.29 RCW). Dental hygienists are licensed to remove stains from the surfaces of teeth, may apply topical preventative prophylactic agents, may polish and smooth restorations, may perform root planing and soft-tissue curettage, and may perform certain dental operations and services delegated to them by a licensed dentist. Dentists are currently limited to employing no more than two dental hygienists for each dentist in a dental office.

Some believe that the possible shortages of dental hygienists in the state may be addressed by authorizing the creation of a separate practice of dental hygiene which has fewer requirements and fewer responsibilities.

SUMMARY:

The creation of a two-tiered system of dental hygiene licensure is authorized. Dental hygienists II are authorized to practice the current full scope of practice of dental hygiene. Currently licensed dental hygienists are automatically classified as dental hygienists II. Dental hygienists I are authorized to practice the full scope of dental hygiene, except that they may not give injections of local anesthetics or place restorations into an oral cavity prepared by a dentist and thereafter to carve, contour and adjust contacts and occlusions of the restoration.

A dental hygienist I may subsequently apply for a license as a dental hygienist II after meeting additional education and examination requirements. Education and examination requirements for dental hygiene I are the same as dental hygiene II except that anesthesia and restorative dentistry are not included.

Licensure by endorsement provisions are amended to reflect the two levels of licensure. Dentists may supervise an unlimited number of individuals licensed as a dental hygienist I.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: requested February 18, 1991