

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5327

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Health & Long-Term Care, February 4, 2003

**Title:** An act relating to dental hygienists.

**Brief Description:** Clarifying the scope of practice of a dental hygienist.

**Sponsors:** Senators Deccio, Thibaudeau and Parlette.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Health & Long-Term Care: 1/29/03, 2/4/03 [DPS].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5327 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Deccio, Chair; Winsley, Vice Chair; Brandland, Franklin, Keiser, Parlette and Thibaudeau.

**Staff:** Tanya Karwaki (786-7447)

**Background:** Dental hygienists licensed in Washington may remove deposits and stains from the surfaces of teeth, apply topical agents, and perform other dental operations and services delegated to them by a licensed dentist.

There is concern that dental hygienists be able to continue applying antimicrobials, a practice not specified in their scope of practice.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** Dental hygienists may apply antimicrobials, which are prescription drugs, under the authority of a dentist.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** The substitute bill clarifies that dental hygienists must be acting under the authority of a dentist when applying antimicrobials. A redundant term, "antibiotic," is removed. The definition of practitioner in the prescription drug statute was amended to indicate that dental hygienists may apply antimicrobials under the supervision of a dentist.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Testimony For:** Until recently, dental hygienists placed antimicrobials under the authority of a dentist. Antimicrobials are important in halting periodontal disease. This practice,

however, was not in the dental hygienist's scope of practice. This bill would clarify that applying antimicrobials is within a dental hygienist's scope of practice. An amendment is needed because antimicrobials are legend drugs which only a practitioner can apply.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Melissa Johnson, Washington State Dental Hygienists Association (pro); Susan Savage, Washington State Dental Hygienists Association (pro); Linda Hull, Washington State Dental Association (pro).