

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1287

As Passed House:
February 2, 2023

Title: An act relating to dental hygienists.

Brief Description: Concerning dental hygienists.

Sponsors: Representatives Thai, Caldier, Graham, Riccelli, Macri, Reed, Pollet and Leavitt.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Postsecondary Education & Workforce: 1/24/23, 1/27/23 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/2/23, 98-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Removes the requirement that a dental hygienist in another state or Canadian province be actively practicing in order to qualify for a temporary license in Washington.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION & WORKFORCE

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Slatter, Chair; Entenman, Vice Chair; Reed, Vice Chair; Ybarra, Ranking Minority Member; Waters, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Hansen, Jacobsen, Klicker, Leavitt, McEntire, Paul, Pollet, Schmidt and Timmons.

Staff: Jim Morishima (786-7191).

Background:

I. Licensing of Dental Hygienists.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

A dental hygienist may remove deposits and stains from the surfaces of teeth; apply topical, preventive or prophylactic agents; polish and smooth restorations; and perform root planing, soft tissue curettage, and other operations and services delegated to him or her by a dentist. Generally, dental hygienists must be supervised by a licensed dentist. In order to be licensed, dental hygienists must complete an educational program, and pass an examination approved by the Dental Hygiene Examining Committee.

II. Initial Limited Licenses.

A dental hygienist licensed in another state or a Canadian province may be temporarily licensed without examination if the applicant provides the Department of Health with certain documentation and information, demonstrates a knowledge of Washington law pertaining to the practice of dental hygiene, pays required fees, and meets requirements for AIDS education. The procedures a dental hygienist with an initial limited license may perform are limited, although the holder of an initial limited license may obtain endorsements for local anesthesia, restorative procedures, or nitrous oxide analgesia.

In order to qualify for the temporary license, the applicant must also show that they are currently engaged in active practice in their home state or province, which means at least 560 hours of practice in the preceding 24 months.

Summary of Bill:

The requirement that an applicant for a temporary dental hygienist license be actively practicing in their home state or province is removed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Workforce issues are among the toughest facing us today. Positions are going unfilled for months in every practice setting. Patients are having to schedule months out and dentists are performing dental hygiene. This bill is an important first step to address the shortage. It is about breaking down workforce barriers. This limited license was enacted in 2004 to get more out-of-state hygienists into Washington. The 560-hour practice requirement is an unnecessary barrier because these individuals are already licensed in good standing in their home states. The requirement effectively bars new licensees. This bill is good for Washington and good for all of us.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative My-Linh Thai, prime sponsor; Melissa Johnson, Washington Dental Hygienists Association; and Emily Lovell, Washington State Dental Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.