

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1287

As of March 9, 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: Passed House: 2/2/23, 98-0.

Committee Activity: Health & Long Term Care: 3/09/23.

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 limited license in Washington.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG TERM CARE

Staff: Andie Parnell (786-7439)

Background: Dental Hygienists. Dental hygienists 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 them by a licensed dentist. Dental hygienists licensed in Washington may perform dental operations and services only under the supervision of a licensed dentist.

Licensure. A dental hygienist must be licensed to practice in Washington State. The Department of Health (DOH) licenses and regulates dental hygienists. To receive a dental hygienist license, an applicant must successfully complete an approved educational program and pass an examination administered or approved by the Dental Hygiene Examining Committee.

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.

DOH may issue an initial limited license without examination to any applicant who:

- holds a valid license in another state or Canadian province with a substantively equivalent scope of practice;
- is currently engaged in active practice in another state or Canadian province, completing 560 hours of practice in the preceding 24 months;
- files required documentation with DOH;
- provides any information DOH deems necessary pertaining to the conditions and criteria of the Uniform Disciplinary Act;
- demonstrates a knowledge of Washington State law pertaining to the practice of dental hygiene, including the administration of legend drugs;
- pays any required fees; and
- meets requirements for AIDS education.

A dental hygienist granted a limited license may perform limited procedures, and may obtain endorsements for local anesthesia, restorative procedures, or nitrous oxide analgesia.

The term of a limited license is 18 months and is renewable upon successfully completing an educational program on the administration of local anesthesia and nitrous oxide analgesia, demonstrating relevant didactic and clinical competency, and successfully passing required examinations.

Summary of Bill: The requirement that an applicant for a limited dental hygienist license be actively practicing in another state or Canadian province is removed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill aims to ensure dental hygienists coming to our state are able to practice immediately. Removing the active practice requirement allows out-of-state hygienists to practice while they are working on additional training for full licensure. The current workforce shortage has a negative impact on access to preventative care, with many positions open and not enough hygienists to fill those positions. The outcomes of this bill would address the workforce shortage and remove barriers for out-of-state applicants.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative My-Linh Thai, Prime Sponsor; Melissa Johnson, Washington Dental Hygienists Association; Emily Lovell, Washington State Dental Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.