

WSR 21-10-058

EMERGENCY RULES

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

(Dental Quality Assurance Commission)

[Filed April 30, 2021, 7:40 a.m., effective April 30, 2021, 7:40 a.m.]

Effective Date of Rule: Immediately upon filing.

Purpose: WAC 246-817-580 Novel coronavirus disease 2019 screening, this emergency rule extends WSR 21-02-040 filed December 30, 2020. The dental quality assurance commission (commission) adopted this emergency rule to allow dentists to delegate administration of novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) screening tests to registered dental assistants, licensed expanded function dental auxiliaries, and licensed dental hygienists with appropriate supervision and demonstration of competency.

Citation of Rules Affected by this Order: New WAC 246-817-580.

Statutory Authority for Adoption: RCW 18.260.040, 18.260.070, 18.29.050, and 18.32.0365.

Other Authority: RCW 18.32.002.

Under RCW 34.05.350 the agency for good cause finds that immediate adoption, amendment, or repeal of a rule is necessary for the preservation of the public health, safety, or general welfare, and that observing the time requirements of notice and opportunity to comment upon adoption of a permanent rule would be contrary to the public interest.

Reasons for this Finding: In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, screening for the disease is essential in dental practice. Dentistry produces large amounts of aerosols and it is important for dentists to appropriately screen patients prior to dental treatment. Delegation of COVID-19 screening test of patients assists dentists by reducing their workload to effectively continue dental care to patients. Knowing whether a patient is positive for COVID-19 will assist dentists in appropriate oral health treatment planning for the patient.

Standard rule making takes approximately nine to twelve months. The commission is proceeding with permanent rule making under WSR 21-04-050 filed on January 27, 2021. Screening needs to be conducted now, as we are in the middle of a pandemic. The rule is necessary for the preservation of public health, safety, and general welfare of dental patients and staff.

The immediate continuance of this emergency rule is necessary for the preservation of public health, safety, and general welfare. Observing the time requirements of notice and opportunity to comment upon adoption of a permanent rule would be contrary to protecting immediate public interests.

As dental procedures are proceeding during this pandemic, there is an influx of patients needing dental care and a greater need of the dental workforce. Allowing dentists to delegate COVID-19 screening tests with supervision to appropriately credentialed dental staff, will allow dentists to provide safe dental care to more patients.

Number of Sections Adopted in Order to Comply with Federal Statute: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0; Federal Rules or Standards: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0; or Recently Enacted State Statutes: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0.

Number of Sections Adopted at the Request of a Nongovernmental Entity: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0.

Number of Sections Adopted on the Agency's own Initiative: New 1, Amended 0, Repealed 0.

Number of Sections Adopted in Order to Clarify, Streamline, or Reform Agency Procedures: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0.

Number of Sections Adopted using Negotiated Rule Making: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0; Pilot Rule Making: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0; or Other Alternative Rule Making: New 1, Amended 0, Repealed 0.

Date Adopted: April 26, 2021.

Aaron Stevens, D.M.D., Chairperson
Dental Quality Assurance Commission

OTS-2716.2

NEW SECTION

WAC 246-817-580 Novel coronavirus disease 2019 screening. (1) A supervising dentist may delegate the administration of a test for screening of novel coronavirus disease 2019 to a registered dental assistant and licensed expanded function dental auxiliary under the dentist's close supervision, provided the registered dental assistant and licensed expanded function dental auxiliary has demonstrated skills necessary to perform the task competently.

(2) A supervising dentist may delegate the administration of a test for screening of novel coronavirus disease 2019 to a licensed dental hygienist under the dentist's general supervision, provided the licensed dental hygienist has demonstrated skills necessary to perform the task competently.

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