

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2012 SESSION

CHAPTER 102

An Act to amend and reenact § 54.1-2722 of the Code of Virginia and to repeal the third enactments of Chapters 99 and 561 of the Acts of Assembly of 2009, as amended by Chapter 289 of the Acts of Assembly of 2011, relating to dental hygienists' scope of practice.

[S 146]

Approved March 6, 2012

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 54.1-2722 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 54.1-2722. License; application; qualifications; practice of dental hygiene.

A. No person shall practice dental hygiene unless he possesses a current, active, and valid license from the Board of Dentistry. The licensee shall have the right to practice dental hygiene in the Commonwealth for the period of his license as set by the Board, under the direction of any licensed dentist.

B. An application for such license shall be made to the Board in writing, and shall be accompanied by satisfactory proof that the applicant (i) is of good moral character, (ii) is a graduate of an accredited dental hygiene program offered by an accredited institution of higher education, (iii) has passed the dental hygiene examination given by the Joint Commission on Dental Examinations, and (iv) has successfully completed a clinical examination acceptable to the Board.

C. The Board may grant a license to practice dental hygiene to an applicant licensed to practice in another jurisdiction if he (i) meets the requirements of subsection B of this section; (ii) holds a current, unrestricted license to practice dental hygiene in another jurisdiction in the United States; (iii) has not committed any act that would constitute grounds for denial as set forth in § 54.1-2706; and (iv) meets other qualifications as determined in regulations promulgated by the Board.

D. A licensed dental hygienist may, under the direction or general supervision of a licensed dentist and subject to the regulations of the Board, perform services that are educational, diagnostic, therapeutic, or preventive. These services shall not include the establishment of a final diagnosis or treatment plan for a dental patient. Pursuant to subsection V of § 54.1-3408, a licensed dental hygienist may administer topical oral fluorides under an oral or written order or a standing protocol issued by a dentist or a doctor of medicine or osteopathic medicine.

A dentist may also authorize a dental hygienist under his direction to administer Schedule VI nitrous oxide and oxygen inhalation analgesia and, to persons 18 years of age or older, Schedule VI local anesthesia. In its regulations, the Board of Dentistry shall establish the education and training requirements for dental hygienists to administer such controlled substances under a dentist's direction.

For the purposes of this section, "general supervision" means that a dentist has evaluated the patient and prescribed authorized services to be provided by a dental hygienist; however, the dentist need not be present in the facility while the authorized services are being provided.

For the purposes of this section, "remote supervision" means that a public health dentist has regular, periodic communications with a public health dental hygienist regarding patient treatment, but such dentist may not have done an initial examination of the patients who are to be seen and treated by the dental hygienist and may not be present with the dental hygienist when dental hygiene services are being provided.

The Board shall provide for an inactive license for those dental hygienists who hold a current, unrestricted license to practice in the Commonwealth at the time of application for an inactive license and who do not wish to practice in Virginia. The Board shall promulgate such regulations as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this section, including requirements for remedial education to activate a license.

E. (Expires July 1, 2012) Notwithstanding any provision of law or regulation to the contrary, a dental hygienist employed by the Virginia Department of Health who holds a license issued by the Board of Dentistry may provide educational and preventative dental care in the ~~Cumberland Plateau, Southside, and Lenowisco Health Districts, which are designated as Virginia Dental Health Professional Shortage Areas by the Virginia Department of Health~~ Commonwealth under the remote supervision of a dentist employed by the Department of Health. A dental hygienist providing such services shall practice pursuant to a protocol ~~adopted by the Commissioner of Health on September 23, 2010, having been developed jointly by (i) the medical directors of each of the districts, the Cumberland Plateau, Southside, and Lenowisco Health Districts; (ii) dental hygienists employed by the Department of Health; (iii) the Director of the Dental Health Division of the Department of Health; (iv) one representative of the Virginia Dental Association; and (v) one representative of the Virginia Dental Hygienists' Association. Such protocol shall be adopted by the Board as regulations.~~

F. A report of services provided by dental hygienists pursuant to such protocol, including their impact upon the oral health of the citizens of ~~these districts~~ *the Commonwealth*, shall be prepared and submitted by ~~the medical directors of the three health districts~~ *the Department of Health* to the Virginia Secretary of Health and Human Resources ~~by January 1, 2012~~ *annually*. Nothing in this section shall be construed to authorize or establish the independent practice of dental hygiene.

2. That the third enactments of Chapters 99 and 561 of the Acts of Assembly of 2009, as amended by Chapter 289 of the Acts of Assembly of 2011, are repealed.