

BULLETIN

Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners General Supervision — Private Dental Office

(Annotated Code of Maryland, Health Occupations Article, §§ 4-206.1, 4-206.2, 4-206.3, and 4-308)

On October 1, 2003 a law took effect in Maryland that permits licensed dental hygienists, under certain prescribed circumstances, to perform dental hygiene services in a private dental office without a dentist on the premises. (Known as “General Supervision”). Since the passage of the law in 2003 dental hygiene duties have expanded and there are certain exceptions to the general rule that dental hygienists may perform dental hygiene services without a dentist on the premises. Those exceptions which require a dentist to be on the premises are explained below under the heading “**Important: Please Note the Exceptions to General Supervision.**”

A dental hygienist may perform dental hygiene services (subject to the exceptions) without a dentist on the premises only if all of the following conditions are met: (A private dental practice is not required to submit an application or seek the Board’s approval before implementing the practice of dental hygiene under general supervision).

1. The dental hygienist holds an active Maryland license to practice dental hygiene;
2. The dental hygienist has at least 1500 hours of dental hygiene clinical practice in direct patient care;
3. The supervising dentist holds an active Maryland license to practice dentistry;
4. The supervising dentist first examines and evaluates the patient. After the supervising dentist examines and evaluates the patient, the prescribed and authorized treatment to be provided by the dental hygienist is written in the patient records;
5. Treatments authorized by the supervising dentist to be provided by the dental hygienist are rendered no later than 7 months from the date the patient was examined and evaluated by the supervising dentist;
6. Upon expiration of a prescription or prescribed treatment, the supervising dentist examines and reevaluates the patient before writing a new prescription and authorization for treatment;
7. Prior to an appointment, the patient or the custodial parent or legal guardian of a minor or incompetent adult shall be informed that a dental hygienist will be providing services previously prescribed by a dentist who will not be on the premises during the appointment, and consent to receiving the dental hygiene services;
8. Written emergency procedures are in place and the dental hygienist is trained to implement the emergency procedures;
9. A designated licensed dentist is available for consultation with the dental hygienist. The licensed dentist need not be on the premises;
10. There is a written agreement between the supervising dentist and the dental hygienist practicing under general supervision that clearly sets forth the terms and conditions under

which the dental hygienist may practice, including a statement that the dental hygienist may provide dental hygiene services without the supervising dentist on the premises.

11. In any 3-month period the number of hours a dental hygienist works without a licensed dentist on the premises must be less than 60 percent of the dental hygienist's total hours; and

12. A supervising dentist may not employ more than 2 dental hygienists to work under the dentist's general supervision at any given time.

Important: Please Note the Exceptions to General Supervision

A dental hygienist must first apply to the Board and receive recognition from the Board before he or she may administer local anesthesia by infiltration or local anesthesia by inferior alveolar nerve block. A dental hygienist must also first apply to the Board and receive recognition from the Board before he or she may monitor a patient to whom nitrous oxide has been administered. Additional education is required for these recognitions.

In addition, under all circumstances, a dentist must be physically on the premises while the dental hygienist performs these procedures. Therefore "General Supervision" does not apply to local anesthesia by infiltration, local anesthesia by inferior alveolar nerve block, and monitoring a patient to whom nitrous oxide has been administered.

Finally, remember that the laws passed by the General Assembly concerning general supervision, like all laws concerning dentistry, may change with time. In addition, the Board may promulgate regulations concerning general supervision. You are responsible to know the laws and regulations regarding dentistry. Statutes passed by the General Assembly regarding dentistry may be accessed on the web at <http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/>. The Board's regulations may be accessed on the web at www.dsd.state.md.us. You are also invited to visit the Board's web site at www.dhmfh.md.gov/dental/.

If you have any questions you are encouraged to speak with Ms. Sandra Sage, Dental Hygienist Coordinator, at 410-402-8510.