

Dental Hygiene Participation In Regulation

The following states have dental hygiene advisory committees or varying degrees of self regulation for dental hygienists.

1. Arizona

The Arizona advisory committee consists of one dentist and one dental hygienist from the board, plus four additional dental hygienists and one public member. The committee serves as a forum for discussion of dental hygiene issues and advises the board on rules and proposed statute changes concerning dental hygiene education, regulation and practice. In addition the committee evaluates CE classes for expanded functions and monitors dental hygienists' compliance with CE requirements.

2. California

The Dental Hygiene Committee of California is a self-regulating dental hygiene committee in conjunction with the Department of Consumer Affairs. The committee consists of four dental hygienists, four public members and one dentist appointed by the governor.

3. Connecticut

Connecticut is unique. Dental hygiene is directly under the health department, and although there is no standing dental hygiene committee, if there is a need to address rules or disciplinary matters, the department director has the ability to appoint an ad hoc committee of dental hygienists.

4. Delaware

Delaware's advisory committee is appointed by the governor and consists of three dental hygienists. During a recent sunset review of the board the committee was granted enhanced authority and now writes the examination for dental hygiene licensure (in conjunction with the dental board). Committee members also vote with the board on issues of dental hygiene licensure by credentials, disciplinary decisions and continuing education requirements for dental hygiene licensure.

5. Florida

Florida has both dental hygiene and dental assisting councils. The dental hygiene council is composed of four dental hygienists, one of whom sits on the board, and one dentist member of the board. The council is expected to develop all dental hygiene rules to submit to the board for its approval.

6. Iowa

Beginning in 1999, both dental hygienists on the dental board and one of the dentists became a dental hygiene committee of the board. This committee has the power to make all rules pertaining to dental hygiene. The board will be required to adopt those rules and enforce the committee rules.

7. Maine

Maine has a subcommittee on dental hygiene. The subcommittee consists of five members: one dental hygienist who is a member of the board; two dental hygienists appointed by the governor; two dentists who are members of the board and appointed by the president of the board. The duties of the subcommittee are to perform an initial review of all applications for licensure as a dental hygienist, submissions relating to continuing education of dental hygienists, and all submissions relating to public health supervision status of dental hygienists.

8. Maryland

Maryland's committee consists of three dental hygienists, one dentist, and one public member, all of whom are full voting members of the dental board. The committee was created during sunset review as a compromise to the creation of a separate dental hygiene regulatory board. According to statute, all matters pertaining to dental hygiene must first be brought to the committee for its review and recommendation.

9. Michigan

A five member advisory committee, comprised of four dental hygienists and one dentist, considers matters related to the dental hygiene profession and makes recommendations to the full board of dentistry. All members of the advisory committee are voting members on the board. The existence of the advisory committee is not mandated by state rules or statutes, but instead is a committee appointed by the chairperson of the board.

10. Missouri

A five member advisory commission, composed of the dental hygienists on the board and four dental hygienists appointed by the governor was created by the state legislature in 2001. The commission will make recommendations to the board concerning dental hygiene practice, licensure, examinations, discipline and educational requirements

11. Montana

In 2002 the board assigned both dental hygienist members and one dentist member to be a standing committee to consider and address dental hygiene issues in a timely fashion. The committee will formulate specific recommendations to bring to the entire board for action.

12. Nevada

Legislation in 2003 added a third dental hygienist to the board, who together with a dentist appointed by the board, will constitute a dental hygiene committee that may formulate recommendations on dental hygiene rules for the board and be assigned additional duties by the board.

13. New Mexico

New Mexico has a board of dental health care comprised of five dentists, two dental hygienists and two public members. There is a dental hygiene committee comprised of five dental hygienists, two public members and two dentists. The committee selects two of its dental hygiene members to serve as the dental hygienists on the board. The board's public members and two of its dentist members are the dentist and public members of the committee. The committee adopts all the rules pertaining to dental hygiene and is also responsible for the discipline of dental hygienists. The board enforces the dental hygiene committee's rules.

14. Oklahoma

The dental hygiene advisory committee is comprised of the dental hygiene board and four additional dental hygienists appointed by the board.

15. Oregon

Under its authority to create standing committees, the Oregon dental board has appointed a committee comprised of three dentists, three dental hygienists, and one non-dental healthcare provider to advise the board concerning dental hygiene issues.

16. Texas

In 1995 a dental hygiene advisory committee comprised of three dental hygienists and two public members appointed by the governor and one dentist appointed by the board was established. All rules relating to the practice of dental hygiene must be submitted to the committee for review 30 days prior to board adoption.

The committee has been responsible for researching and developing recent rules for licensure by credentials and the application of tetracycline fibers. Legislation in 2003 gave the committee the authority to propose specific rules for board action.

17. Washington

The state of Washington has a uniform disciplinary code which applies to all health professions and creates the regulatory bodies to implement each practice act. Dentistry and dental hygiene have separate practice acts. Dentists are regulated by the Dental Quality Assurance Commission (an independent dental board with no dental hygiene members). Dental hygienists are regulated by the Dental Hygiene Advisory Committee (comprised of three dental hygienists and one public member appointed by the department). Created in the early eighties, its original charge was to develop rules for dental hygiene education and licensure. Now, the committee has authority to originate all dental hygiene rules. Although nominally advisory, it meets and deliberates like a board. The department of health has consistently implemented rules as proposed by the committee.