

Background Information on Legislation to Allow Dental Hygienists to Provide Education or Oral Screening Services without being supervised by a Dentist

- Dental Hygienists in Iowa can perform four types of oral health tasks under Iowa law:
 - Educational—training of public and other health care professionals on good oral health practices
 - Therapeutic—removal of plaque and calculus from teeth
 - Preventative—applying sealants to prevent cavities
 - Diagnostic—providing oral inspection of teeth
 - See Iowa Code Section 153.15, IARC 650-10.3(153)

- Iowa law requires a dental hygienist to perform these services under the supervision of a dentist
 - Three types of supervision allowed in Iowa
 - Direct Supervision—Dentist must be on-site
 - General Supervision, Dentist does not have to be on-site, but is aware of work being done by dental hygienist
 - Public Health Supervision—Dentist develops formal agreement with hygienist allowing hygienist to see a person before person has seen dentist and perform functions within the dental hygienist’s scope of practice

- Hygienists perform some functions in which supervision requirement doesn’t make sense
 - Educational services—hygienist is teaching proper oral health techniques, not performing any procedures
 - Oral screenings—hygienist is performing minimally invasive procedure (shining light in mouth of patient, looking to see if any issues exist)

- Supervision requirement is a burden on hygienist who wishes to continue providing services to the community, but is no longer affiliated with a supervising dentist
- Proposed legislation would eliminate supervision requirement for these two items.
 - No change in scope of practice, just in supervision level.
- For questions, contact Tom Cope at 515-975-4590.

Proposed Change in Iowa law regarding supervision of Educational and Oral Screening Services

1. Amend 153.15 to read, “Such services, with the exception of educational services and oral screening services, shall be performed under supervision of a licensed dentist. . . .”

2. Add to Iowa Code Chapter 153: Educational services is defined as assessing the need for planning, implementing, and evaluating oral health education programs for individual patients and community groups; conducting workshops and in-service training sessions on dental health for nurses, school personnel, institutional staff, community groups and other agencies providing consultation and technical assistance for promotional, preventative and educational services. (Note: identical to 650-10.3(1)(a))

3. Add to Iowa Code Chapter 153: Oral Screening services means any of the following, with a requirement that the person receiving the services be referred to a dentist for a comprehensive exam, diagnosis, and treatment plan:
 1. Reviewing medical and dental health histories
 2. Performing oral inspection