Utilization of the Dental Hygiene Workforce

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Overview

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2. State Legislation
3. Career Opportunities in Public Health
4. Dental Support Organization (DSO)
Dental Hygiene– Fast Facts

- Dental hygienists are professionally licensed.

- Nationally, there are more than 300 dental hygiene education programs with an average of 84 credit hours or about three years in length.

- 49 states require continuing education credits for licensure renewal.
Direct Access

- The ability of a dental hygienist to initiate treatment based on their assessment of a patient’s needs without the specific authorization of a dentist, treat the patient without the presence of a dentist, and maintain a provider-patient relationship.
Colorado

Unsupervised Dental Hygiene Practice

• No requirement that a dentist must authorize or supervise most dental hygiene services.

• Dental hygienist may own a dental hygiene practice.

• Dental hygienist can provide dental hygiene diagnosis, radiographs, remove deposits, accretions, and stains, perform incidental curettage, apply fluorides and other recognized preventive agents, topical anesthetic, oral inspection and charting. May prescribe low-dose sodium fluoride supplements, lozenges and drops, topical fluorides and topical anti-infectives. Local anesthesia requires general supervision.
Florida

Health Access Dental Hygiene

• May practice in health access settings
• Must maintain liability insurance
• All licensed dental hygienists may participate
• Services include: prophylaxis, dental charting, take vital signs, record history, apply sealants and fluoride varnish

Settings:
• Program or an institution of the Department of Children and Families, the Department of Health, the Department of Juvenile Justice
• Nonprofit community health center
• Head Start center
• Federally qualified health center or look-alike as defined by federal law
• School-based prevention program
• Clinic operated by an accredited college of dentistry, or an accredited dental hygiene program
Rhode Island
Public Health Dental Hygienist

- May practice in public health settings
- Performs dental hygiene procedures without the immediate or direct supervision or direction of a dentist, any procedure or service that is within the dental hygiene scope of practice
- Must enter into a written collaborative agreement with a local or state government agency or institution or with a licensed dentist

Settings:
- Residences of the homebound
- Schools
- Nursing homes
- Long-term care facilities
- Clinics
- Hospitals
- Medical facilities
- Community health centers
Illinois

Public Health Dental Hygienist

• May practice in public health settings

• Provides prophylactic cleanings, application of fluoride, placement of sealants, and take radiographs. Additional services may be prescribed by the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation

• Must have 2 years of full-time clinical experience or an equivalent of 4,000 hours of clinical experience and have completed at least 42 clock hours of additional structured courses in dental education approved by rule in advanced areas specific to public health dentistry

• The dental hygienist must also practice pursuant to a written public health supervision agreement with a dentist

Settings:

• Federally qualified health center
• Federal, state, or local public health facility
• Head Start program
• Supplemental nutrition program for Women, Infants, and Children facility
• Certified school-based health center
• School-based oral health program
Arizona
Affiliated Practice Dental Hygienist

- May practice, pursuant to a written affiliated practice agreement with a dentist, in public health settings
- The full dental hygiene scope is permitted with the exception of root planing, nitrous oxide and the use of local anesthesia unless under specified circumstances
- Must be licensed for 5 years and be engaged in dental hygiene practice for at least 500 in each of the last 2 years. Alternatively, a holder of a bachelor's degree in dental hygiene, an active license for 3 years and at least 500 hours of practice each year in the last 2 years
- Must successfully complete 12 hours of continuing education and a CPR certificate

Settings:
- Health care organization or facility
- Long-term care facility
- Public health agency or institution
- Public or private school authority
- Government-sponsored program
- Private nonprofit or charitable organization
- Social service organization or program
Missouri
Public Health Dental Hygienist

- May provide services without supervision in public health settings to Medicaid-eligible children and can be directly reimbursed
- May provide prophylactic cleanings, application of fluoride and placement of sealants
- Dental hygienist must have 3 years of experience
- In 2016, new legislation introduced use of telehealth for dentist and dental hygienists

Settings:
- No specific restrictions, however delivery of services must be sponsored by a government health entity
Oregon Pilot Project

Training Dental Hygienists to Place Interim Therapeutic Restorations

- Educate Expanded Practice Dental Hygienists and demonstrate that they can successfully place Interim Therapeutic Restorations
- Project will also demonstrate the effectiveness and potential of the telehealth connected dental team model
- Pilot testing will occur in several sites in the Polk County Center School District
Oregon Pilot Project

Oregon Tribes Dental Health Aide (DHAT) Therapist Pilot Project

- Develop a new category of dental professional in Oregon
- Will train 5-7 DHATs
- DHATs will provide treatment in two tribal dental clinics
Introducing Dental Therapy

- Another pilot project is in a study phase from Lane Community College focused on dental therapy.
- Plans include a dual track program, an accelerated program for dental hygienists and an extended option for high school graduates.
- Recently received a $100,000 grant from the Kellogg Foundation.
In 2012, the state of Oregon created the Expanded Practice Permit to enable dental hygienists to provide a variety of dental hygiene services, without the supervision of a dentist, for limited-access regions or populations.

- No collaborative agreement required.

- Work in a variety of settings, such as nursing homes and schools, and many are employed as private business owners.
What is a Dental Support Organization? (DSO)

- Dental Support Organizations (DSOs) contract with dental practices to provide business management and support including non-clinical operations.
- DSOs allow dental offices to maximize their practice and attention to patient care with the addition of professional office management.
Career Opportunities in Public Health

Community Health programs are typically funded by government or nonprofit organizations. These positions often offer an opportunity to provide care to those who otherwise would not have access to dental care. Examples of public health opportunities include a variety of roles and settings:

- Clinicians, Administrators, Researchers
- State Public Health Officer
- Community Clinic Administrator
- Indian Health Service
- Head Start programs
- Local health departments
- National Health Service Corps
- School sealant programs
- Rural or inner city community clinics
Program/Grant Administrator: Matt Crespin, MPH, RDH

“No one day is the same as the previous and that is what I love about my job.”

Daily activities include educating legislators and policy makers, evaluating programs, visiting school-based oral health programs and providing technical assistance to improve efficiency.

The Children’s Health Alliance of Wisconsin manages one of the country’s largest and most successful state based oral health prevention program based in schools. Their model of care has been replicated by other states across the country.

Was interested in becoming a dentist and thought having a background in dental hygiene would be a great benefit. After leaving school Matt decided not to pursue dental school and instead use his education in dental hygiene to improve oral health.
United States Public Health Service Representative: Melissa Reese, BSDH

“Your mouth is the entry way to your body. If it is diseased, you are diseased. End of story.”

Became a dental assistant in 1997 and then fell in love with the field of dentistry.

The most rewarding experience of her life was when she became a Commissioned Officer in the United States Public Health Service (USPHS) after a short stint in private practice.

Has the best of both worlds: dental hygiene on a part-time basis combined with planning, developing, and implementing community-level oral health projects.

Work as a USPHS allows for the development and coordination of broad-scale oral health outreach services, serving more than 318,000 Native American and Alaskan Native peoples.
“A healthy mouth equals a healthy body. So many miss that connection.”

Worked in the air force as a dental assistant and hygienist while also receiving training as a field medic.

His love for Public Health began at this time for the military model was the public health model and he saw individual oral health to be more important than any profit driven model.

Only RDH on staff at Native American Health Center, and works directly with dental student externs and residents to train and hone their skills in dental hygiene, specifically techniques, equipment, and preventative strategies and interventions.
Public Health FQHC/Local Health Department: Betty Kabel, RDH, BS

“My team of dental hygienists and I feel we are improving the oral health of children and making a difference in their lives.”

Works with the FDHA to advocate for change in the delivery of dental hygiene services.

Has experience working at the University level, in dental outreach, and at the State-level in Northern Florida.

Her current position is different than the traditional clinical setting because she deals directly with government hurdles and barriers.
Advanced Dental Therapist: Heather Luebben, ADT, RDH, BASDH, MSOHCP

“Oral hygiene is important for everyone, especially the underserved populations, as they have trouble accessing care, including preventative care.”

The volunteering she did throughout her time working in private practice inspired her to work in the public health sector.

Has an M.S. Oral Health Care Practitioner degree from Metropolitan State University.

Chose the Advanced Dental Therapist program because it allowed her to help patients at a greater capacity while simultaneously advancing her education.