

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2007**

**SESSION LAW 2007-124  
SENATE BILL 1337**

**AN ACT AMENDING THE NORTH CAROLINA DENTAL HYGIENE ACT TO  
PROVIDE FOR CERTAIN ACTIVITIES TO BE PERFORMED BY LICENSED  
HYGIENISTS OUTSIDE THE DIRECT SUPERVISION OF A DENTIST.**

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**SECTION 1.** G.S. 90-221 reads as rewritten:

**"§ 90-221. Definitions.**

(a) "Dental hygiene" as used in this Article shall mean the performance of the following functions: Complete oral prophylaxis, application of preventive agents to oral structures, exposure and processing of radiographs, administration of medicaments prescribed by a licensed dentist, preparation of diagnostic aids, and written records of oral conditions for interpretation by the dentist, together with such other and further functions as may be permitted by rules and regulations of the Board not inconsistent herewith.

(b) "Dental hygienist" as used in this Article, shall mean any person who is a graduate of a Board-accredited school of dental hygiene, who has been licensed by the Board, and who practices dental hygiene as prescribed by the Board.

(c) "License" shall mean a certificate issued to any applicant upon completion of requirements for admission to practice dental hygiene.

(d) "Renewal certificate" shall mean the annual certificate of renewal of license to continue practice of dental hygiene in the State of North Carolina.

(e) "Board" shall mean "The North Carolina State Board of Dental Examiners" created by Chapter 139, Public Laws of 1879, and Chapter 178, Public Laws of 1915 as continued in existence by G.S. 90-22.

(f) "Supervision" as used in this Article shall mean that acts are deemed to be under the supervision of a licensed dentist when performed in a locale where a licensed dentist is physically present during the performance of such acts, except those acts performed under direction and in compliance with G.S. 90-233(a) or G.S. 90-233(a1), and such acts are being performed pursuant to the dentist's order, control and approval."

**SECTION 2.** G.S. 90-233 reads as rewritten:

**"§ 90-233. Practice of dental hygiene.**

(a) A dental hygienist may practice only under the supervision of one or more licensed dentists. This subsection shall be deemed to be complied with in the case of dental hygienists employed by or under contract with a local health department or State government dental public health program and especially trained by the Dental Health Section of the Department of Health and Human Services as public health hygienists, while performing their duties for the persons officially served by the local health department or State government program under the direction of a duly licensed dentist employed by that program or by the Dental Health Section of the Department of Health and Human Services.

(a1) A dental hygienist who has three years of experience in clinical dental hygiene or a minimum of 2,000 hours performing primarily prophylaxis or periodontal debridement under the supervision of a licensed dentist, who completes annual CPR certification, who completes six hours each year of Board-approved continuing education in medical emergencies in addition to the requirements of G.S. 90-225.1, and

who is designated by the employing dentist as being capable of performing clinical hygiene procedures without the direct supervision of the dentist, may perform one or more dental hygiene functions as described in G.S. 90-221(a) without a licensed dentist being physically present if all of the following conditions are met:

- (1) A licensed dentist directs in writing the hygienist to perform the dental hygiene functions.
- (2) The licensed dentist has personally conducted an evaluation of the patient which shall include a complete oral examination of the patient, a thorough analysis of the patient's health history, a diagnosis of the patient's condition, and a specific written plan for treatment.
- (3) The dental hygiene functions directed to be performed in accordance with this subsection shall be conducted within 120 days of the dentist's evaluation.
- (4) The services are performed in nursing homes; rest homes; long-term care facilities; rural and community clinics operated by Board-approved nonprofits; rural and community clinics operated by federal, State, county, or local governments; and any other facilities identified by the Office of Rural Health and approved by the Board as serving dental access shortage areas.

(a2) A dental hygienist shall not establish or operate a separate care facility that exclusively renders dental hygiene services.

(a3) A dental hygienist who has been disciplined by the Board may not practice outside the direct supervision of a dentist under G.S. 90-233(a1). A dentist who has been disciplined by the Board may not allow a hygienist to work outside of that dentist's direct supervision under G.S. 90-233(a1).

(a4) Each dentist who chooses to order dental hygiene services under G.S. 90-233(a1) shall report annually to the Board the number of patients who were treated outside the direct supervision of the dentist, the location in which the services were performed by the hygienist, and a description of any adverse circumstances which occurred during or after the treatment, if any. The dentist's report shall not identify hygienists or patients by name or any other identifier.

(a5) Clinical dental hygiene services shall be provided in compliance with both CDC and OSHA standards for infection control and patient treatment.

(b) A dentist in private practice may not employ more than two dental hygienists at one and the same time who are employed in clinical dental hygiene positions.

(c) Dental hygiene may be practiced only by the holder of a license or provisional license currently in effect and duly issued by the Board. The following acts, practices, functions or operations, however, shall not constitute the practice of dental hygiene within the meaning of this Article:

- (1) The teaching of dental hygiene in a school or college approved by the Board in a board-approved program by an individual licensed as a dental hygienist in any state in the United States.
- (2) Activity which would otherwise be considered the practice of dental hygiene performed by students enrolled in a school or college approved by the Board in a board-approved dental hygiene program under the direct supervision of a dental hygienist or a dentist duly licensed in North Carolina or qualified for the teaching of dentistry pursuant to the provisions of G.S. 90-29(c)(3), acting as an instructor.
- (3) Any act or acts performed by an assistant to a dentist licensed to practice in this State when said act or acts are authorized and permitted by and performed in accordance with rules and regulations promulgated by the Board.
- (4) Dental assisting and related functions as a part of their instructions by students enrolled in a course in dental assisting conducted in this State and approved by the Board, when such functions are performed under

the supervision of a dentist acting as a teacher or instructor who is either duly licensed in North Carolina or qualified for the teaching of dentistry pursuant to the provisions of G.S. 90-29(c)(3)."

**SECTION 3.** This act becomes effective October 1, 2007.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 20<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2007.

s/ Beverly E. Perdue  
President of the Senate

s/ Joe Hackney  
Speaker of the House of Representatives

s/ Michael F. Easley  
Governor

Approved 5:44 p.m. this 27<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2007