



Virginia Dental
ASSOCIATION

Remote Supervision Overview and Guidance Document

Remote Supervision Legislation Background

- In 2016, the General Assembly voted unanimously to pass legislation that was a comprehensive expansion of the oral health care safety net. The legislation gave dentists, and certain defined facilities, the ability to remotely supervise (vs. in office) dental hygienists using an explicit protocol constructed by a cooperative effort by the Virginia Dental Association, Virginia Dental Hygienists Association and other stakeholders. The statutes still require a supervision by the ‘supervising dentist’ whether it be in a private practice or in one of the defined facilities.
- In 2017, the definition of remote supervision was amended to allow dental hygienists to see patients in a wide variety of locations including health centers, free clinics, long term care facilities, schools, head start programs & many other programs.

A dental hygienist shall only practice under remote supervision at a, federally qualified health center; charitable safety net facility, free clinic, long-term care facility, elementary or secondary school, Head Start program, or women, infants, and children (WIC)

- The goal of this legislation was to increase access to dental care, particularly for patients in rural and remote locations, many of whom have Medicaid benefits.
- The new law simply modified the original legislation to broaden the types of facilities (see above) in which a hygienist may practice under remote supervision and gives some additional protocols for a hygienist to treat medically compromised patients and those with periodontal disease.
 - Dental hygienists may provide hygiene services following a written practice protocol developed by the supervising dentist.

Remote Supervision Overview

What is remote supervision?

- "remote supervision" means that a supervising dentist is accessible and available for communication and consultation with a dental hygienist during the delivery of dental hygiene services, but such dentist may not have conducted an initial examination of the patients who are to be seen and treated by the dental hygienist and may not be present with the dental hygienist when dental hygiene services are being provided.

What is required of a dental hygienist to treat patients under remote supervision?

- A dental hygienist may practice dental hygiene under the remote supervision of a licensed dentist in Virginia.
- The following are the requirements for the dental hygienists
 - Complete a continuing education course designed to develop the competencies needed to provide care under remote supervision offered by an accredited dental education program or from a continuing education provider approved by the Board (see CE emergency regulations and available courses at end of this document)
 - ***Have had at least two years of clinical experience, consisting of at least 2,500 hours of clinical experience.***
 - Have professional liability insurance with policy limits acceptable to the supervising dentist.

Where can a dental hygienist practice under remote supervision?

- Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC)
- Charitable Safety Net Facility
- Free Clinic
- Long-term Care Facility
- Elementary or Secondary School
- Head Start program
- Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program.

What is a dental hygienist permitted to do under remote supervision?

- Obtain a patient's treatment history and consent
- Perform an oral assessment
- Perform scaling and polishing
- Perform all educational and preventative services
- Take X-rays as ordered by the supervising dentist or consistent with a standing order
- Maintain appropriate documentation in the patient's chart

- Administer topical oral fluorides under **an oral or written order or a standing protocol issued by a dentist or a doctor of medicine or osteopathic medicine pursuant to subsection V of § 54.1-3408**
- Perform any other service ordered by the supervising dentist or required by statute or Board regulation. No dental hygienist practicing under remote supervision shall administer local anesthetic or nitrous oxide.

What MUST a dental hygienist practicing under remote supervision obtain prior to providing a patient dental hygiene services?

- The patient's or the patient's legal representative's signature on a statement disclosing that the delivery of dental hygiene services under remote supervision is not a substitute for the need for regular dental examinations by a dentist.
- Verbal confirmation from the patient that he does not have a dentist of record whom he is seeing regularly.

What are the communication and practice protocol requirements of a dental hygienist practicing under remote supervision and the supervising dentist?

- After conducting an initial oral assessment of a patient, **a dental hygienist practicing under remote supervision may provide further dental hygiene services following a written practice protocol developed and provided by the supervising dentist.** Such written practice protocol shall consider, at a minimum, the medical complexity of the patient and the presenting signs and symptoms of oral disease.
- A dental hygienist practicing under remote supervision shall inform the supervising dentist of all findings for a patient. **A dental hygienist practicing under remote supervision may continue to treat a patient for 90 days. After such 90-day period, the supervising dentist, absent emergent circumstances, shall either conduct an examination of the patient or refer the patient to another dentist to conduct an examination.** The supervising dentist shall develop a diagnosis and treatment plan for the patient, and either the supervising dentist or the dental hygienist shall provide the treatment plan to the patient. The supervising dentist shall review a patient's records at least once every 10 months.

Additional Notes:

- Nothing in the law or regulations prevents a dental hygienist from practicing dental hygiene under general supervision whether as an employee or as a volunteer.
- The Code of Virginia 54.1-2722 addresses Remote Supervision. The entire code can be found online at the following link:
<https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title54.1/chapter27/section54.1-2722/>

Virginia Board of Dentistry Continuing Education Requirements

(Emergency Regulations Effective November 13, 2017)

H. In order to practice under remote supervision in accordance with subsection F of § 54.1-2722 of the Code of Virginia, a dental hygienist shall complete a continuing education course of no less than two hours in duration that is offered by an accredited dental education program or a sponsor listed in subsection C of this section and that includes the following course content: 1. Intent and definitions of remote supervision; 2. Review of dental hygiene scope of practice and delegation of services; 3. Administration of controlled substances; 4. Patient records, documentation, and risk management; 5. Remote supervision laws for dental hygienists and dentists; 6. Written practice protocols; and 7. Settings allowed for remote supervision.

Continuing Education Courses Available to Fulfill the Board's CE Requirements

1. Remote Supervision Continuing Education Course (SAVE THE DATE)

Virginia Dental Hygienists' Association/Peninsula Component

Saturday, January 13, 2018

Time: AM (Specifics TBD); 2 CE credits; Cost: TBA; Location: TBA

2. Remote Supervision: Guidelines for Practice

Saturday, February 24th:

9:00-12:00PM

This session will present the latest information on remote supervision in Virginia providing knowledge on what it means, regulations impacting your practice, the variety of settings approved for remote supervision and how would an interested dental hygienist practice remotely. Participants will have time for group discussion on settings of interest at each table along with a report out of observations. The panel will respond to a question and answer session. Completion of this course, provided by the Virginia Dental Hygienists' Association, earns the certificate validating the licensee's compliance with the Virginia Board of Dentistry regulation.

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More details found here: <https://www.odu.edu/cepd/dental-hygiene/winter-weekend>