



Mississippi Dental Society
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November 2, 2017

Dr. Roy Irons, President
Ms. Leah Diane Howell, Executive Director
Mississippi State Board of Dental Examiners
600 East Amite Street, Suite 100
Jackson, MS 39201-2801

RE: Mississippi Dental Society (MDS) Position on Dental Supervision

Dear Dr. Irons, Ms. Howell and MSBDE Representatives

Upon discussion with members of the MDS Advisory Committee on the request of the MDHA to change direct supervision to general supervision, the MDS supports the change to general supervision. Since our incorporation on April 1, 1920, the MDS has always stressed the importance of providing patient care to all communities with progressive preventive dental care. We feel that by working together to create a stronger dental team our treatment model can increase care to meet the needs of our growing population in Mississippi.

Upon review of items noted below listed in the <http://mississippiadha.org/Advocacy-efforts>. These are reasons the MDS supports a change from direct to general supervision, including:

1. Dental hygienists earn college degrees (Associate's or Bachelor's) from an institute of higher learning accredited by the American Dental Association's Council on Dental Accreditation. In fact, each Mississippi RDH graduating from an accredited institution must be successful in the exact same educational standards as the RDHs licensed in states practicing general supervision.
2. Competency standards are rigorous for dental hygienists. For initial licensure in Mississippi, a RDH must successfully pass:
 - a. The National Dental Hygiene Board Exam
 - b. A regional clinical board exam,
 - c. A computerized case-based regional exam,
 - d. A jurisprudence exam
 - e. Apply for licensure regulated and overseen by the MSBDE.
3. A total of 96% of the United States (48 out of 50 states) allow dental hygienists to work under general supervision and, as of July 2017, Mississippi is the only* state in the nation with graduates from accredited dental hygiene programs who work under direct supervision of dentists after graduation.



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General supervision of RDHs specifies that a supervising dentist authorizes his or her licensed dental hygienist to perform preventive procedures, but is not required to be physically present. But general supervision requirements wouldn't stop there. Additional stipulations must be met in order for RDHs to work without the physical presence of a dentist, including requiring:

- That the RDH has a year (or 1,600 hours) of patient treatment experience
- Current CPR Certification
- Adhering to medical emergency written protocols established by the dentist
- That the dentist has diagnosed and examined the patient within 11 months prior to the appointment
- That patients are notified in advance that the dentist will not be on site, and the dental hygienist cannot diagnose any dental conditions,
- That the RDH cannot practice dental hygiene for more than a set number of consecutive days; and
- That RDHs provide proof of liability insurance to the MSBDE.

The MDS feels that the MSBDE Regulation 13 need to be re-evaluated and changed to allow a supervising dentist to provide general supervision to a licensed RDH to perform preventive procedures, without the dentist being physically present.

In conclusion, change is hard. However, we should not be so dogmatic in thinking that we as dentist are losing some level of control of our profession. We must embrace the changes that are needed by working together to improve preventive care for our fellow Mississippians. Mississippi will never be last in my heart and I know it will never be last in yours. Therefore, let us make this change in policy and thinking, so that we can improve the healthcare and lives of those we took our oath to serve. Our fellow Mississippians.

I and members of the Mississippi Dental Society look forward to helping with this change in policy and thank you for your consideration of that change.

Respectfully,

Anthony D. Newman, D.M.D.
MDS President, 2017-18