

**Title of Document: Protocol for Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) Dental Hygienists to Practice in an Expanded Capacity under Remote Supervision by DBHDS Dentists**

**Reference to 18VAC60-20-220: Regulations Governing Dental Practice – Dental Hygienists**

**Definitions:**

- “*Expanded capacity*” means that a DBHDS dental hygienist provides education, assessment, prevention and clinical services as authorized in this protocol under the remote supervision of a DBHDS dentist.
- “*Remote supervision*” means that a DBHDS dentist has regular, periodic communications with a DBHDS dental hygienist regarding patient treatment, but who has not done an initial examination of the patients who are to be seen and treated by the dental hygienist, and who is not necessarily onsite with the dental hygienist when dental hygiene services are delivered.

**Management and Practice Requirements:**

- Program guidance and quality assurance shall be provided by the Office of Integrated Health in the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS), for the DBHDS dentists providing supervision under this protocol. Guidance for all DBHDS dental hygienists providing services through remote supervision is outlined below:
  - DBHDS compliance includes a review of the remote supervision protocol with the dental hygienist. The hygienist will sign an agreement consenting to remote supervision according to the protocol. The hygienist will update the remote agreement annually attaching a copy of their current dental hygiene license, and maintain a copy of the agreement on-site while providing services under this protocol.
  - DBHDS training by the DBHDS dentist will include didactic and on-site components utilizing evidence based protocols, procedures and standards from the American Dental Association, the American Dental Hygienists’ Association, the Special Care Dental Association, The Americans with Disabilities Act, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors, as well as the DBHDS OSHA, Hazard Communication and Blood Borne Pathogen Control Plan.
  - The dental patient in the DBHDS mobile/remote supervision program will fill out an application for services and it will be pre-determined that the applicant cannot obtain dental services at an appropriate provider in the community. It is also pre-determined that the individual applying for services cannot use or obtain services with their insurance provider if applicable.
  - DBHDS monitoring during remote supervision activities by the DBHDS dentist shall include tracking the locations of planned service delivery and review of daily reports of the services provided. Phone, video, email, or

personal communication between the DBHDS dentist and the dental hygienist working under remote supervision will occur at a minimum of every 14 days.

- DBHDS on-site review to include a sampling of the patients seen by the dental hygienist under remote supervision will be completed annually by the supervising public health dentist. During the on-site review, areas of program and clinical oversight will include appropriate patient documentation for preventive services (consent completed, assessment of conditions, forms completed accurately), clinical quality of preventive services (technique and sealant retention), patient management and referral, compliance with evidence-based program guidance, adherence to general emergency guidelines, and OSHA and Infection Control compliance.
  - The DBHDS dentist or dental hygienist will obtain 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. The patient or legal representative will be informed that limited described services will be provided.
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- No limit shall be placed on the number of full or part time DBHDS dental hygienists that may practice under the remote supervision of a DBHDS dentist(s)
  - The dental hygienist may use and supervise dental assistants under this protocol as set forth by the Virginia Board of Dentistry regulations.
  - The dental patient shall be examined by the DBHDS dentist annually unless the patient has been referred to a community provider at which time treatment and care of the individual will be transferred to the referral office or practice.
  - The dental hygienist shall have graduated from an accredited dental hygiene school, be licensed in Virginia, and employed by DBHDS in a full or part time position and have a minimum of two years of dental hygiene practice experience.
  - Written basic emergency procedures shall be established and in place, and the hygienist shall be capable of implementing those procedures.

**Expanded Capacity Scope of Services:**

DBHDS dental hygienists may perform the following duties under remote supervision:

- Performing an initial examination or assessment of teeth and surrounding tissues, including charting existing conditions including carious lesions, periodontal pockets or other abnormal conditions for further evaluation by a dentist, as required.
- Intraoral radiographs as indicated per the patient's treatment plan.
- Behavior assessments to determine the patient's need for sedation dentistry and subsequent referrals to sedation dental provider.
- Interactive non-appointment sessions to reduce dental anxiety, and to acclimate the patient into the dental setting.
- Prophylaxis of natural and restored teeth.

- Scaling and root planing of natural and restored teeth using hand instruments, and ultrasonic devices.
- Placement of dental sealants, including subsequent assessment, maintenance and repair.
- Administer Schedule VI topical drugs.
- Providing educational services, assessment, screening or data collection for the preparation of preliminary written records for evaluation by a licensed dentist.

**Required Referrals:**

- DBHDS dental hygienists will refer patients to a participating DBHDS dental program dentist with the goal to establish a permanent dental home, if there is a participating provider within a 50 mile or 60 minute radius from the patient's home location. The DBHDS dental hygienist will also consider sedation needs when placing individuals into the community.
- The DBHDS dental program staff will follow up with all referred individuals to determine their status on a quarterly basis.
- In the event there is no participating dentist within the previously outlined distance from the individual needing dental placement, and/or the closest participating dentist cannot meet the needs requirements of the individual, the DBHDS mobile dental team will continue to provide preventative and basic care as needed per the patient's unique treatment plan. This may include the in person examination and treatment by the DBHDS supervising dentist.