

POLICY REGARDING THE MONITORING OF NITROUS OXIDE-OXYGEN (N₂O-O₂) MINIMAL SEDATION BY QUALIFIED DENTAL ASSISTANTS AND DENTAL HYGIENISTS

Preamble: The purpose of this policy is to clarify the Ohio State Dental Board's (Board) position regarding the monitoring of nitrous oxide-oxygen (N₂O-O₂) minimal sedation by qualified dental assistants and dental hygienists.

Dental Assistants: 4715-11-02 Basic qualified personnel: functions

Paragraph (B)(38) of Ohio Administrative Code section 4715-11-02 stipulates that a dental assistant may monitor N₂O-O₂ minimal sedation if specific requirements are met. Further, in order to be allowed to monitor N₂O-O₂ minimal sedation under the direct supervision of the licensed dentist, the dental assistant must document current completion of basic life-support, and all education and examination requirements on a form supplied by the Board. This form MUST be maintained in the dental office wherein the dental assistant is practicing.

Dental Hygienists: 4715-9-01 Permissible practices of a dental hygienist

Paragraph (A)(3) of Ohio Administrative Code section 4715-9-01 stipulates that a dental hygienist may monitor N₂O-O₂ minimal sedation if specific requirements are met. Additionally, all licensed dental hygienists may perform the duties of basic qualified personnel under the direct supervision of a licensed dentist, including the monitoring of N₂O-O₂ minimal sedation. As with the dental assistant, in order to be allowed to monitor N₂O-O₂ minimal sedation under the direct supervision of the licensed dentist, the dental hygienist must document current completion of basic life-support, and all education and examination requirements on a form supplied by the Board. This form MUST be maintained in the dental office wherein the dental hygienist is practicing.

Webster's Dictionary defines a monitor as someone who advises, warns or cautions. The verb monitoring is defined as "to watch or check on", or "to check on or regulate the performance of, [a machine]."

It is the position of the Board that with respect to the Administrative Code section in question, monitoring means to watch or check on. Once the licensed dentist has initiated and administered the nitrous oxide, the trained dental auxiliary is to monitor the N₂O-O₂ minimal sedation and advise or warn the dentist if something is wrong. The dentist then is the one responsible for adjusting levels, etc. The only thing a dental auxiliary can do short of monitoring, –is remove the nitrous oxide delivery apparatus from the patient in an emergency.

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