

POLICY REGARDING TREATMENT WITHIN THE SCOPE OF DENTAL PRACTICE

Preamble: The scope of dental practice is ever expanding. The purpose of this policy is to clarify the Ohio State Dental Board's (Board) position regarding the development of technologies and techniques dentists and dental hygienists may utilize and their relationship to scope of practice.

The Dental Practice Act gives the Board discretion to make determinations as to what is and is not within the scope of practice for dentists and dental hygienists, and what acts or omissions qualify as not meeting the accepted standards of care for the profession.

The definition of dentistry in Ohio is consistent with the American Dental Association's (ADA) definition of dentistry: The evaluation, diagnosis, prevention and/or treatment (nonsurgical, surgical or related procedures) of diseases, disorders and/or conditions of the oral cavity, maxillofacial area and/or the adjacent and associated structures and their impact on the human body; provided by a dentist, within the scope of his/her education, training and experience, in accordance with the ethics of the profession and applicable law.

Evidence-based dentistry is an approach to oral health care that requires the judicious integration of systematic assessments of clinically relevant scientific evidence, relating to the patient's oral and medical condition and history, with the dentist's clinical expertise and the patient's treatment needs and preferences. Parameters of care for dental patients and standards of care for treatment of patients are developed based on this approach.

Using these definitions, the Board considers available scientific evidence, educational requirements of the ADA accredited programs within the dental schools and residency programs, and peer reviewed accredited educational programs consistent with an evidenced based approach to dentistry, to aid in its determination of the scope of dental practice.

Moreover, Ohio accepts the ADA definitions for specialty practice. The scope of practice of dentists who announce as specialists shall be limited exclusively to the special area(s) of dental practice announced by the dentist. The specialties delineate these limitations within the educational requirements of their accredited training programs.

The ADA has a code of ethical and professional conduct for the practice of dentistry. All dentists must be aware of their own limitations and level of training in determining their individual competence levels within the scope of practice of dentistry. Using these ethical and professional standards each dentist chooses how to practice dentistry. The expectation, for all patients, is the dentist is competent in providing an adequate diagnosis and treatment plan, informed consent, and appropriate treatment. Additionally, the dentist is expected to be competent in recognizing and treating complications.

It is important to keep in mind that this policy deals with an important, ever evolving concept.

(Approved June 30, 2010)