



Ohio State Dental Board

August 26, 1996

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BUREAU OF
DENTAL HEALTH

Mark Siegal, D.D.S., M.P.H.
Chief, Bureau of Oral Health Services
The Ohio Department of Health
246 North High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43266-0588

Re: Scope of Dental Hygiene

Dear Dr. Siegal:

The Ohio State Dental Board (Board) has reviewed and considered your correspondence dated July 16, 1996 concerning the permissibility of dental hygienists to engage in certain basic tasks outside the direct supervision of a dentist. Specifically you question the hygienist's ability to provide home care instruction, use toothbrushes and dental floss in demonstrating proper usage to a patient, and perform initial screenings for oral disease in the assessment of the patient's need to see a dentist.

The Board has determined that these tasks that you have addressed can be performed by a hygienist outside the direct supervision of a dentist in the special needs programs of which you are involved, because these practices are used in educating patients about the importance of good dental hygiene, and the public has not been adversely affected by this practice. Therefore, the Board sees no reason to change the current policy in this area.

The Board acknowledges that the duties mentioned in your letter concerning instruction on the proper use of dental devices and the like are, in fact, tasks that are engaged in by other health care professionals less qualified in dentistry than dental hygienists, and therefore this task in instruction is not strictly considered the practice of dental hygiene. Further, the Board will continue to accept its policy which allows dental hygienists to perform initial oral health screenings in the special needs programs.

Thank you for your inquiry in this area.

Sincerely,

FRANK C. WILLIAMS, D.D.S.
Secretary

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