

Assembly Bill No. 1334

CHAPTER 850

An act to amend Sections 1775 and 1777 of the Business and Professions Code, relating to dentistry.

[Approved by Governor September 30, 2006. Filed with Secretary of State September 30, 2006.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1334, Salinas. Dentistry: registered dental hygienists.

Under existing law, the Dental Practice Act, dental auxiliaries are licensed and regulated by the Committee on Dental Auxiliaries and the Dental Board of California. Existing law authorizes a registered dental hygienist in alternative practice to perform certain functions of a registered dental hygienist, subject to specified conditions.

Existing law authorizes a registered dental hygienist in alternative practice to perform dental hygiene services for a patient who presents a prescription for the services issued by a dentist or physician and surgeon who has performed a physical examination and a diagnosis of the patient prior to the prescription being provided, as specified. The prescription may be valid for a period not to exceed 15 months.

This bill would require a registered dental hygienist in alternative practice to obtain written verification that a patient has been examined by a dentist or physician and surgeon if the hygienist provides services to the patient 18 months or more after the first date that the hygienist provides services. The bill would require that the verification include a prescription for dental hygiene services, which prescription may be valid for a period not to exceed 2 years. The bill would provide that failure to comply with these provisions would be considered unprofessional conduct.

Existing law authorizes a registered dental hygienist or a registered dental hygienist in extended functions to perform specified procedures in designated settings under the direct supervision of a registered dental hygienist.

This bill would also authorize a registered dental hygienist in alternative practice to directly supervise the performance of these procedures.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 1775 of the Business and Professions Code is amended to read:

1775. (a) A registered dental hygienist in alternative practice may perform those preventive and therapeutic functions described in

subdivision (a) of Section 1760, subdivision (a) of Section 1760.5, and subdivisions (a) and (b) of Section 1762 as an employee of a dentist or of another registered dental hygienist in alternative practice, or as an independent contractor, or as a sole proprietor of an alternative dental hygiene practice, or as an employee of a primary care clinic or specialty clinic that is licensed pursuant to Section 1204 of the Health and Safety Code or as an employee of a primary care clinic exempt from licensure pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 1206 of the Health and Safety Code, or as an employee of a clinic owned or operated by a public hospital or health system, or as an employee of a clinic owned and operated by a hospital that maintains the primary contract with a county government to fill the county's role under Section 17000 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

(b) A registered dental hygienist in alternative practice may perform the dental hygiene services specified in subdivision (a) in the following settings:

- (1) Residences of the homebound.
- (2) Schools.
- (3) Residential facilities and other institutions.
- (4) Dental health professional shortage areas, as certified by the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development in accordance with existing office guidelines.

(c) A registered dental hygienist in alternative practice shall not do any of the following:

- (1) Infer, purport, advertise, or imply that he or she is in any way able to provide dental services or make any type of dental health diagnosis beyond those services specified in subdivision (a).
- (2) Hire a registered dental hygienist to provide direct patient services other than a registered dental hygienist in alternative practice.

(d) A registered dental hygienist in alternative practice may submit or allow to be submitted any insurance or third-party claims for patient services performed as authorized pursuant to this article.

(e) A registered dental hygienist in alternative practice may hire other registered dental hygienists in alternative practice to assist in his or her practice.

(f) A registered dental hygienist in alternative practice may hire and supervise dental assistants performing functions specified in subdivision (b) of Section 1751.

(g) A registered dental hygienist in alternative practice shall provide to the board documentation of an existing relationship with at least one dentist for referral, consultation, and emergency services.

(h) (1) A dental hygienist in alternative practice may provide services to a patient without obtaining written verification that the patient has been examined by a dentist or physician and surgeon licensed to practice in this state.

(2) If a dental hygienist in alternative practice provides services to a patient 18 months or more after the first date that he or she provides

services to a patient, he or she shall obtain written verification that the patient has been examined by a dentist or physician and surgeon licensed to practice in this state. The verification shall include a prescription for dental hygiene services as described in subdivision (i). Failure to comply with this paragraph or subdivision (i) shall be considered unprofessional conduct.

(i) A registered dental hygienist in alternative practice may perform dental hygiene services for a patient who presents to the registered hygienist in alternative practice a written prescription for dental hygiene services issued by a dentist or physician and surgeon licensed to practice in this state. The prescription shall be valid for a time period based on the dentist's or physician and surgeon's professional judgment, but not to exceed two years from the date that it was issued.

SEC. 2. Section 1777 of the Business and Professions Code is amended to read:

1777. While employed by or practicing in a primary care clinic or specialty clinic licensed pursuant to Section 1204 of the Health and Safety Code, in a primary care clinic exempt from licensure pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 1206 of the Health and Safety Code, or a clinic owned and operated by a hospital that maintains the primary contract with a county government to fill the county's role under Section 17000 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, a registered dental assistant or a registered dental assistant in extended functions may perform the following procedures under the direct supervision of a registered dental hygienist or a registered dental hygienist in alternative practice, pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 1763:

(a) Coronal polishing, after providing evidence to the board of having completed a board-approved course in that procedure.

(b) Application of topical fluoride.

(c) Application of sealants, after providing evidence to the board of having completed a board-approved course in that procedure.