

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 1437
By: Sibley
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DIGEST AND PURPOSE

Currently, state law requires an applicant for a dental hygienist license to be a graduate of a recognized school of dentistry or dental hygiene, which often requires a commitment of two or more years for a person to graduate. During the past decade there has been a decline in the number of dental hygienists as a proportion of the state's population, creating a shortage of hygienists and an obstacle to providing oral hygiene services to the citizens of the state. As proposed, S.B. 1437 establishes dental hygiene equivalency training programs to offer alternate training to increase the supply of hygienists and expand the oral hygiene services in the state.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Sets forth the findings of the legislature relating to dental hygienists in Texas.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 256.053, Occupations Code, to conform to Section 19, Chapter 627, Acts of the 76th Legislature, Regular Session, 1999, and to add certain requirements to the list of qualifications which an applicant for a license to practice dental hygiene in this state must meet. Requires a school of dentistry or dental hygiene described by Subsection (a)(4) to include at least two full academic years of instruction or its equivalent at the postsecondary level.

SECTION 3. Amends Chapter 256B, Occupations Code, by adding Section 256.0531, as follows:

Sec. 256.0531. DENTAL HYGIENE EQUIVALENCY TRAINING PROGRAMS. (a) Requires a program approved by the State Board of Dental Examiners (board) under this section to provide dental hygiene training that is substantially equivalent to training provided under traditional programs. Requires a program to meet the requirements of Subsections (b)-(e).

(b) Requires the dental hygiene equivalency program (program) to require a dental hygiene student to complete four semesters of didactic education from a school of dentistry, dental hygiene school, or other educational institution approved by the board.

(c) Requires the didactic education required under Subsection (b) to be provided by instruction in the classroom or by distance learning, remote course work, or similar modes of instruction offered by an institution accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation of the American Dental Association (commission). Authorizes the board to require the didactic education to include instruction in anatomy, pharmacology, x-ray, ethics, jurisprudence, hygiene, and any other subjects regularly taught in reputable schools of dentistry and dental hygiene.

(d) Requires the program to require a dental hygiene student to complete not less than 1,000 hours of clinical training under the direct supervision of a dentist during a 12-month period. Requires a dental hygiene student to satisfactorily complete 75 full-mouth prophylaxes and demonstrate the ability to accurately record the location and extent of dental restorations and to chart mobility, furcation, gingival recession, keratinized gingiva, and pocket depth on six aspects of each tooth. Authorizes clinical training to occur simultaneously with didactic education.

(e) Requires a dental hygiene student, before beginning clinical training, to complete not less than two years of full-time employment in a position involving clinical duties with dental patients.

(f) Requires a dentist, to be qualified to train a dental hygiene student under this section, to meet certain criteria.

(g) Requires a dental hygiene student who completes the requirements of a program under this section to satisfactorily pass the examination required for applicants for a dental hygienist license under this chapter.

(h) Authorizes a dental hygienist to train dental hygiene students under this section under certain circumstances.

(i) Provides that a dentist who supervises a dental hygienist trained under this section has the same liability for acts performed by the hygienist as if the dental hygienist were trained in a different manner.

SECTION 4. (a) Effective date: September 1, 2001.

(b) Requires the board to implement the program under Section 256.0531, Occupations Code, as added by this Act, not later than January 1, 2002.

SECTION 5. (a) Provides that in accordance with Section 311.031(c), Government Code, which gives effect to a substantive amendment enacted by the same legislature that codifies the amended statute, the text of Section 256.053, Occupations Code, as set out in this Act, gives effect to the changes made by Section 19, Chapter 627, Acts of the 76th Legislature, Regular Session, 1999.

(b) Provides that, to the extent of any conflict, this Act prevails over another Act of the 77th Legislature, Regular Session, 2001, relating to nonsubstantive additions and corrections in enacted codes.