

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2021

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SENATE BILL 146  
Health Care Committee Substitute Adopted 3/17/21

Short Title: Teledentistry/RDH Admin. Local Anesthetic. (Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

February 25, 2021

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH STANDARDS FOR THE PRACTICE OF TELEDENTISTRY, TO  
3 AUTHORIZE PROPERLY TRAINED DENTAL HYGIENISTS TO ADMINISTER  
4 LOCAL DENTAL ANESTHETICS UNDER DIRECT SUPERVISION OF A LICENSED  
5 DENTIST, AND TO PERMIT CERTAIN DENTAL HYGIENISTS TO PRACTICE  
6 DENTAL HYGIENE AT SCHOOLS WITHOUT A LICENSED DENTIST BEING  
7 PHYSICALLY PRESENT.

8 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

9 SECTION 1.(a) G.S. 90-29(b) reads as rewritten:

10 "(b) A person shall be deemed to be practicing dentistry in this State who does, undertakes  
11 or attempts to do, or claims the ability to do any one or more of the following acts or things  
12 which, for the purposes of this Article, constitute the practice of dentistry:

13 ...

14 (6) Administers an anesthetic of any kind in the treatment of dental or oral  
15 diseases or physical conditions, or in preparation for or incident to any  
16 operation within the oral cavity; provided, however, that this subsection shall  
17 not apply to a lawfully qualified nurse anesthetist who administers such  
18 anesthetic under the supervision and direction of a licensed dentist or  
19 ~~physician~~;physician, or to a registered dental hygienist qualified to administer  
20 local anesthetics.

21 ...

22 (11) Owns, manages, supervises, controls or conducts, either ~~himself or himself~~,  
23 by and through another person or other persons, or by use of any electronic or  
24 other digital means, any enterprise wherein any one or more of the acts or  
25 practices set forth in subdivisions (1) through (10) above are done, attempted  
26 to be done, or represented to be ~~done~~;done.

27 ...."

28 SECTION 1.(b) Article 2 of Chapter 90 of the General Statutes is amended by  
29 adding a new section to read:

30 "§ 90-30.2. Teledentistry practice; definitions; requirements.

31 (a) The following definitions apply in this section:

32 (1) Authorized person. – An appropriate person with legal authority to make the  
33 health care treatment decision for a patient.

34 (2) Licensed dental hygienist. – An individual who holds a valid license to  
35 practice dental hygiene duly issued by the North Carolina Board of Dental  
36 Examiners in accordance with Article 16 of this Chapter.



- 1           (3)    Licensed dentist. – A person who holds a valid license to practice dentistry  
2                   duly issued by the North Carolina Board of Dental Examiners in accordance  
3                   with this Article.
- 4           (4)    Licensee. – A person who is a licensed dental hygienist or licensed dentist in  
5                   this State.
- 6           (5)    Practice of teledentistry. – The provision of dental services by use of any  
7                   electronic or other digital means, as authorized in G.S. 90-29(b)(11) and  
8                   provided for in subsection (b) of this section.
- 9           (6)    Supervision. – Acts are deemed to be under the supervision of a licensed  
10                   dentist when performed pursuant to the licensed dentist's order, control, and  
11                   approval and do not require the physical presence of the licensed dentist.
- 12       (b)    Practice of Teledentistry Requirements. – For the purposes of this Article, the practice  
13       of teledentistry includes any of the following:
- 14           (1)    Delivery of service. – Teledentistry services may be delivered by a licensed  
15                   dentist or a licensed dental hygienist who is under the supervision of a licensed  
16                   dentist. Licensees shall comply with all rules of professional conduct and  
17                   applicable State and federal law relevant to licensed dentists and licensed  
18                   dental hygienists when delivering teledentistry services.
- 19           (2)    Encounter location. – The location of service is determined at the time  
20                   teledentistry services are initiated, as follows:
- 21                   a.    When the service is between patient and provider, the location of the  
22                    patient is the originating site, and the location of the provider is the  
23                    distant site.
- 24                   b.    When the service is between providers, conducted for the purposes of  
25                    consultation, the location of the provider initiating the consult is the  
26                    originating site, and the location of the consulting provider is the  
27                    distant site.
- 28           (3)    Data. – Any licensee, patient, or authorized person may transmit data,  
29                   electronic images, and related information as appropriate to provide  
30                   teledentistry services to a patient.
- 31           (4)    Patient care. – A licensee using teledentistry services in the provision of dental  
32                   services to a patient shall take appropriate steps to establish the  
33                   licensee-patient relationship, conduct all appropriate evaluations and history  
34                   of the patient, and provide access to comprehensive dental care where  
35                   clinically indicated.
- 36           (5)    Evaluations. – Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, patient  
37                   evaluations may be conducted by a licensed dentist using teledentistry  
38                   modalities.
- 39       (c)    Informed Consent. – A licensee who provides or facilitates the use of teledentistry  
40       shall ensure that the informed consent of the patient or authorized person is obtained before  
41       services are provided through teledentistry. All informed consents shall be included in the  
42       patient's dental records. To obtain an informed consent, the licensee shall do all of the following:
- 43           (1)    Confirm the identity of the requesting patient.
- 44           (2)    Verify and authenticate the patient's health history.
- 45           (3)    Disclose the licensee's identity, applicable credentials, and contact  
46                   information, including a current phone number and mailing address of the  
47                   licensee's practice.
- 48           (4)    Obtain an appropriate informed consent from the requesting patient after  
49                   disclosures have been made regarding the delivery models and treatment  
50                   methods and limitations, including any special informed consents regarding  
51                   the use of teledentistry services.

1           (5) In addition to other areas that must be discussed in traditional in-person dental  
2 encounters with a patient before treatment, the informed consent shall inform  
3 the patient or authorized person and document acknowledgment of the risk  
4 and limitations of all of the following:

5           a. The use of electronic communications in the provision of care.

6           b. The potential for breach of confidentiality, or inadvertent access of  
7 protected health information using electronic and digital  
8 communication in the use of teledentistry.

9           c. The types of activities permitted using teledentistry services.

10          (6) Inform the patient or authorized person that it is the role of the licensed dentist  
11 to determine whether the condition being diagnosed or treated is appropriate  
12 for a teledentistry encounter.

13          (7) Obtain written consent from the patient or authorized person to forward  
14 patient-identifiable information to a third party.

15          (8) Provide the patient and authorized person with contact information for the  
16 North Carolina State Board of Dental Examiners and a description of, or link  
17 to, the patient complaint process.

18          (d) Confidentiality. – The licensee shall ensure that any electronic and digital  
19 communication used in the practice of teledentistry is secure to maintain confidentiality of the  
20 patient's medical information as required by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability  
21 Act of 1996 (HIPAA) and all other applicable laws and administrative regulations. Patients  
22 receiving services through teledentistry under this section are entitled to protection of their  
23 medical information no less stringent than the requirements that apply to patients receiving  
24 in-person services.

25          (e) Patient Dental Records. – Records of teledentistry services provided to a patient or  
26 authorized person shall be held to the same record retention standards as records of traditional  
27 in-person dental encounters. A patient record established during the use of teledentistry services  
28 shall be accessible to both the licensee and the patient or authorized person, consistent with all  
29 established State and federal laws and regulations governing patient health care records. In  
30 addition to other areas that must be included in traditional in-person dental encounters, the  
31 licensee shall document or record in the patient dental record all of the following:

32           (1) The patient's presenting problem.

33           (2) The patient's diagnosis.

34           (3) The patient's treatment plan.

35           (4) A description of all services that were provided through teledentistry.

36          (f) Prescribing. – The indication, appropriateness, and safety considerations for each  
37 prescription for medication, laboratory services, or dental laboratory services provided through  
38 the use of teledentistry shall be evaluated by the licensed dentist in accordance with applicable  
39 law and current standards of care, including those for appropriate documentation. A licensed  
40 dentist's use of teledentistry carries the same professional accountability as a prescription issued  
41 in connection with an in-person encounter. A licensed dentist who prescribes any type of  
42 analgesic or pain medication as part of the provision of teledentistry services shall comply with  
43 all applicable North Carolina Controlled Substance Reporting System requirements."

44           **SECTION 1.(c)** G.S. 90-41 reads as rewritten:

45           **"§ 90-41. Disciplinary action.**

46           (a) The North Carolina State Board of Dental Examiners shall have the power and  
47 authority to (i) Refuse to issue a license to practice dentistry; (ii) Refuse to issue a certificate of  
48 renewal of a license to practice dentistry; (iii) Revoke or suspend a license to practice dentistry;  
49 and (iv) Invoke such other disciplinary measures, censure, or probative terms against a licensee  
50 as it deems fit and proper;

51 in any instance or instances in which the Board is satisfied that such applicant or licensee:

- 1 ...  
2 (25) Has distributed or caused to be distributed any intoxicant, drug or narcotic for  
3 any other than a lawful purpose; ~~or~~  
4 (26) Has engaged in any unprofessional conduct as the same may be, from time to  
5 time, defined by the rules and regulations of the ~~Board~~ Board;  
6 (27) Has allowed fee-splitting for the use of teledentistry services; or  
7 (28) Has limited, in any way, a patient's right or ability to raise grievances or file  
8 complaints with any appropriate oversight body, including the North Carolina  
9 State Board of Dental Examiners, the North Carolina Department of Justice,  
10 Division of Medicaid Investigations, and the North Carolina Department of  
11 Health and Human Services, Division of Health Benefits, Office of  
12 Compliance and Program Integrity.

13 ...."

14 **SECTION 2.(a)** G.S. 90-221(a) reads as rewritten:

15 "(a) "Dental hygiene" as used in this Article shall mean the performance of the following  
16 functions: Complete oral prophylaxis, application of preventive agents to oral structures,  
17 exposure and processing of radiographs, administration of medicaments prescribed by a licensed  
18 dentist, preparation of diagnostic aids, and written records of oral conditions for interpretation  
19 by the dentist, together with such other and further functions as may be permitted by rules and  
20 regulations of the Board not inconsistent herewith. Notwithstanding the provisions of  
21 G.S. 90-29(b)(6), dental hygiene shall include the administration of local anesthetics by  
22 infiltration and block techniques by dental hygienists certified pursuant to G.S. 90-225.2, if a  
23 dental hygienist conducts administration of local anesthetics under the direct supervision of a  
24 dentist licensed to practice dentistry under Article 2 of this Chapter."

25 **SECTION 2.(b)** G.S. 90-221 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

26 "(b1) "Direct supervision" as used in this Article shall mean that acts are deemed to be under  
27 required supervision only when performed in a locale where the supervising licensed dentist is  
28 physically present and shall not include supervision under G.S. 90-233(a) and (a1)."

29 **SECTION 2.(c)** Article 16 of Chapter 90 of the General Statutes is amended by  
30 adding a new section to read:

31 **§ 90-225.2. Current hygiene students in CODA-approved curriculum programs.**

32 Programs required for dental hygienists licensed in this State to qualify to administer local  
33 anesthetics pursuant to G.S. 90-221(a) shall be taught using lecture and laboratory or clinical  
34 formats at the University of North Carolina School of Dentistry, the East Carolina University  
35 School of Dental Medicine, or a dental hygiene program accredited by the Council on Dental  
36 Accreditation (CODA), or a similar organization approved by the United States Department of  
37 Education. The training program will include, at a minimum, a 30-hour session composed of 16  
38 didactic hours and 14 clinical hours. Clinical instruction shall be provided by a dentist holding a  
39 DDS or DMD degree, and the faculty to student ratio shall be no greater than 1:5 for the  
40 laboratory and clinical instruction. Courses must be taught to a minimum score of eighty percent  
41 (80%) in the parenteral administration of local anesthesia, and successful students shall be  
42 awarded a certificate of completion."

43 **SECTION 2.(d)** Article 16 of Chapter 90 of the General Statutes is amended by  
44 adding a new section to read:

45 **§ 90-225.3. Requirements to administer local anesthetics for licensed dental hygienists;**  
46 **reciprocity.**

47 (a) The Board may approve a dental hygienist licensed in this State or any other state or  
48 territory to provide local anesthesia upon the dental hygienist meeting all of the following criteria:

- 49 (1) Produces satisfactory evidence of the required education, training, and clinical  
50 qualifications to provide local anesthesia.

1           (2)   Has been practicing dental hygiene, as defined in G.S. 90-221, under the  
 2           supervision of a licensed dentist for a minimum of two years immediately  
 3           preceding the date of the application.

4           (3)   Has successfully completed a course of study on local anesthetics offered  
 5           through a school or college approved by the United States Department of  
 6           Education or a Board-approved continuing education provider that includes  
 7           all of the following:

8           a.     A minimum of 16 lecture hours on pharmacology, physiology,  
 9           equipment, block and infiltration techniques, legal issues, and medical  
 10          emergencies, including systemic complications.

11          b.     A minimum of eight clinical hours of instruction and experience in  
 12          administering local anesthesia injections.

13          c.     Completion of at least 12 block and 12 infiltration injections under the  
 14          direct supervision of a licensed dentist who must certify the applicant's  
 15          competency.

16          (b)   If an applicant cannot satisfy the requirements as set forth in subsection (a) of this  
 17          section, the Board may require the licensed dentist hygienist to complete all or parts of the  
 18          requirements specified in subsection (a) of this section before the applicant can be qualified to  
 19          administer intraoral, local dental anesthetics in this State.

20          (c)   Dental hygienists who administer local anesthetics must maintain current CPR  
 21          training and annually complete two hours of approved continuing education which shall include  
 22          a review of local anesthetic technique, contraindications, systemic complications, medical  
 23          emergencies related to local anesthesia, and a general overview of dental office emergencies.  
 24          These hours may be among those chosen to satisfy the hours of continuing education otherwise  
 25          required of licensed dental hygienists in this Article."

26          **SECTION 3.** G.S. 90-233 reads as rewritten:

27          "**§ 90-233. Practice of dental hygiene.**

28                 ...

29          (a1)   A dental hygienist who has three years of experience in clinical dental hygiene or a  
 30          minimum of 2,000 hours performing primarily prophylaxis or periodontal debridement under the  
 31          supervision of a licensed dentist, who completes annual CPR certification, who completes six  
 32          hours each year of Board-approved continuing education in medical emergencies in addition to  
 33          the requirements of G.S. 90-225.1, and who is designated by the employing dentist as being  
 34          capable of performing clinical hygiene procedures without the direct supervision of the dentist,  
 35          may perform one or more dental hygiene functions as described in G.S. 90-221(a) without a  
 36          licensed dentist being physically present if all of the following conditions are met:

37                 ...

38          (4)   The services are performed in nursing homes; rest homes; long-term care  
 39          facilities; schools; rural and community clinics operated by Board-approved  
 40          nonprofits; rural and community clinics operated by federal, State, county, or  
 41          local governments; and any other facilities identified by the Office of Rural  
 42          Health and approved by the Board as serving dental access shortage areas.

43                 ...."

44          **SECTION 4.** The North Carolina State Board of Dental Examiners may adopt  
 45          temporary rules to implement the provisions of this act.

46          **SECTION 5.** Section 2 of this act becomes effective October 1, 2021, and applies to  
 47          licenses granted or renewed on or after that date. The remainder of this act is effective when it  
 48          becomes law.