

The Oregon Board of Dentistry (OBD) filed a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking Hearing on December 8, 2004 regarding some proposed rules changes. The OBD held a hearing on those proposed rule changes on Thursday, January 20, 2005 at which individuals were able to present testimony on the proposed rule changes. The OBD reviewed that testimony and discussed the proposed rule changes and adopted the proposed rules at a Board Meeting on January 21, 2005. These rules will take effect February 1, 2005. The following are the

RULE CHANGES CONCERNING THE PRACTICE OF DENTAL HYGIENE

Effective February 1, 2005, four significant rule changes will go into effect significantly changing the practice of Dental Hygiene in the state of Oregon.

OAR 818-035-0025(1) will now state: "A dental hygienist may not: Diagnose and treatment plan other than for dental hygiene services." This rule change means that a dental hygienist, after being authorized by a supervising dentist to do so, may diagnose and treatment plan the need for dental hygiene services for a patient. This does not mean that a hygienist can then go ahead with the treatment for that patient. Rather, the hygienist must first review the diagnosis and treatment plan with the supervising dentist, and then receive authorization by the supervising dentist to proceed with the treatment for that patient.

OAR 818-035-0025(5) will now state: "A dental hygienist may not: Prescribe any drug, other than fluoride, fluoride varnish, antimicrobial solutions for mouth rinsing or resorbable antimicrobial agents." This rule change means that a dental hygienist, after being authorized by a supervising dentist to do so, may prescribe any of those drugs for a patient.

The rule OAR 818-035-0025(9) "A dental hygienist may not: Take impressions for permanent prosthodontic appliances, bridges, or other permanent structures to be worn in the mouth" has been eliminated. This rule change means that a dental hygienist, after being authorized by a supervising dentist to do so, may take impressions for permanent prosthodontic appliances, bridges, or other permanent structures to be worn in the mouth of a patient.

OAR 818-035-0030 will now state: "In addition to the functions set forth in ORS 679.010, a dental hygienist may perform the following functions under the general supervision of a licensed dentist: (5) Administer and dispense antimicrobial solutions or resorbable antimicrobial agents in the performance of dental hygiene functions." This rule change means that a dental hygienist, after being authorized by a supervising dentist to do so, may administer and dispense antimicrobial solutions or resorbable antimicrobial agents without having to have written orders that are tooth and site specific.

Although these rule changes have significantly increased duties that a dental hygienist may perform, none of these increased duties can be done without the authorization of the supervising dentist. It is still the supervising dentist's choice to allow a hygienist to perform any of these duties, and the supervising dentist still has the obligation to ensure that the hygienist has the training required to perform any of these functions.