

CLASS CONCEPT AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The DENTAL HYGIENIST is a paraprofessional position that works under the supervision of a licensed dentist to train patients in dental hygiene and render preventive and therapeutic oral prophylaxis. Employees in this classification provide chairside dental assistance. If licensed for expanded functions, may take patient X-rays, administer local anesthetic agents and restorative functions. If possessing additional permits, may administer nitrous oxide. If possessing an Expanded Practice Dental Hygiene Permit, may provide further expanded dental hygiene services.

Employees have clearly understood work instructions and expected results. Choices can be made amongst various procedures as they relate to the situation at hand. Conditions and elements of issues must be identified and analyzed to determine interrelationships. Variations of situations require research to find available answers.

Clinical Responsibilities: Record and review patient medical histories and appropriately modify treatment plans. Examine gums, using probes, to locate periodontal recessed gums and signs of gum disease; feel and visually examine soft tissues for signs of disease and pathology and oral cancer. Chart signs of decay and disease for diagnosis and treatment by dentist. Develop and present dental hygiene treatment plans. Administer local anesthetic agents as indicated. Clean calcareous deposits, accretions, plaque and stains from teeth and beneath margins of gums using dental instruments. Place periodontal dressings. Use high speed hand pieces to polish restorations. Apply temporary soft relines to complete dentures for the purpose of tissue conditioning. Perform all aspects of teeth whitening. Determine the need for and appropriateness of sealants and fluoride. Maintain dental equipment and sharpen and sterilize dental instruments. Administer fluoride, desensitizing agents and dispense antimicrobial solutions or other antimicrobial agents in the performance of dental hygiene functions. Prescribe as described by the Dental Practice Act. Remove excess cement from coronal surfaces of teeth. Conduct dental health clinics for community groups to augment services of dentist. Perform and adhere to infection control procedures and guidelines throughout clinical work.

Dental Hygiene Education: Instruct and demonstrate to patients or students of various age levels proper care of the mouth and teeth, promote interest in the prevention of dental disease. Some employees in this class instruct teachers, dental students or institutional staff on the techniques of oral hygiene and dental health. May provide technical assistance in the planning of a dental health program through conference with professional superiors. Provide patient education about the relationship between oral and systemic health, which may include smoking cessation, diabetes, heart disease or nutrition.

Administrative Functions: Make entries to patient charts to record examination findings or treatment procedures according to rules, policies and procedures. Schedule and confirm patient appointments and recalls. Prepare daily schedules and pull charts for patients. Under dentist's supervision, some employees in this class process dental insurance forms, assist with patient billing and account collection, and prepare patient and office production statistics. Perform clerical support tasks to enhance the function of the dental clinic as needed.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES

This is a single classification and not currently part of a series of classes.

The responsibilities within the Concept and Distinguishing Features are characteristic of the type and level of work associated with this class. Individual positions may do all or some combination of the responsibilities listed as well as other related responsibilities.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS

Possession of a dental license as a dental hygienist issued by the Oregon Board of Dentistry at the time of appointment and maintained throughout employment.

NOTE: Some positions may require endorsements for Radiologic Proficiency Endorsement and Local Anesthesia.

Knowledge and Skills:

Knowledge of the equipment, terminology, procedures and methods used in dental hygiene and dental assisting.

Knowledge of the anatomy and physiology of hard and soft oral structures.

Knowledge of oral bacteriology and pathology.

Knowledge of pharmacology related to agents used in oral evaluations and treatments.

Skill in speaking to others to convey information effectively.

Skill in active listening, giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate.

Skill in critical thinking, using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions or approaches to problems.

Skill in judgment and decision making to consider the relative costs and benefits of potential actions to choose the most appropriate one.

Skill in service orientation, actively looking for ways to help people.

Skill in social perceptiveness, being aware of others' reactions and understanding why they react as they do.

Skill in writing effectively as appropriate for the needs of the audience.

Skill in active learning to understand the implications of new information for both current and future problem-solving and decision-making.

Skill in adjusting actions in relation to others' actions.

Skill in teaching others how to do something.

Skill in persuading others to change their behavior.

Skill in reading comprehension to understand written sentences and paragraphs in work related documents.

Skill in time management.

NOTE: The KNOWLEDGE and SKILLS (KS) are required for initial consideration. Some duties performed by positions in this class may require different KS. No attempt is made to describe every KS required for **all** positions in this class. Additional KS requirements will be explained on the recruiting announcement.

Adopted: