

# THE EXPANDED PRACTICE PERMIT – FAQ

BY INGRID NYE, EXAMINATION & LICENSING MANAGER

*Originally appeared in OBD Newsletter, Winter 2017. Revised to reflect 2020 rule changes.*

Nearly two decades ago, the Oregon Board of Dentistry (OBD), following legislation passed in 1997 by the Oregon State Legislature, began offering a “Limited Access Permit” – later retitled an “Expanded Practice Permit” (EPP) – for dental hygienists. By obtaining this permit, a dental hygienist could become an “Expanded Practice Dental Hygienist” (EPDH). Dental hygienists in Oregon work under the supervision of a dentist, however, an EPDH is permitted to provide most hygiene services, without the supervision of a dentist, at locations and populations identified by the Oregon State Legislature as historically underserved in regards to preventative oral healthcare.

I have catalogued our most commonly asked questions about the EPP. For more information, please refer to the Oregon Dental Practice Act (DPA), specifically ORS 680.205, OAR 818-035-0065, OAR 818-035-0066, and OAR 818-035-0100. Additionally, our OBD staff members are always happy to answer any questions you may have about any part of the DPA!

**Question:** Is an EPDH permitted to provide dental hygiene services without supervision to all Oregonians?

**Answer:** No. An EPDH may only provide services to patients identified in ORS 680.205(1) and OAR 818-035-0066.

**Question:** Does the word “Expanded” in the Expanded Practice Permit mean that it allows an EPDH to perform “expanded” services that dental hygienists without the permit are not permitted to provide?

**Answer:** No. The EPP only allows an EPDH to work without supervision at certain locations and/or on certain populations (ORS 679.205(1) and OAR 818-035-0066) as outlined in the DPA. It does not “expand” the duties dental hygienists are permitted to perform.

**Question: Question:** If a dental hygienist with an EPP is working at a dental office (such as a private practice, group practice, etc.) and the dentist is out of the office, is that dental hygienist working under the general supervision of the dentist or are they working without supervision and utilizing their EPP?

**Answer:** This is perhaps the most common misunderstanding of the EPP’s function. The EPP allows a dental hygienist to treat the populations and locations outlined in ORS 680.205(1) and OAR 818-035-0066, without supervision. When working on populations other than those outlined in the previous citations, all dental hygienists (with or without the EPP) work under the general supervision of a licensed dentist. Having an EPP has nothing to do with the dentist being in the office or not. In OAR 818-001-0002(5), the DPA defines “general supervision” as “supervision requiring that a dentist authorize the procedures, but not requiring that a dentist be present when the authorized procedures are performed”. Again, the EPP is only applicable to certain locations and/or populations outlined in ORS 679.205(1) and OAR 818-035-0066.

**Question:** May an EPDH who also holds a Nitrous Oxide Permit administer nitrous oxide to patients while practicing under their EPP?

**Answer:** No. The DPA expressly prohibits nitrous oxide administration by an EPDH with a Nitrous Oxide permit. Hygienists who hold a Nitrous Oxide Permit (regardless of whether or not they also hold an EPP) may only administer nitrous oxide to patients under the indirect supervision of a licensed dentist, which requires that a licensed dentist authorize the procedures; additionally, the dentist must remain on the premises while the procedures are performed.

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**Question:** What is a Collaborative Agreement?

**Answer:** A Collaborative Agreement is an approved agreement between a licensed dentist and an EPDH, which allows that EPDH to perform some or all of the following services while practicing under their EPP: Administering local anesthesia (if the EPDH also has a local anesthesia endorsement); administering temporary restorations without excavation; and prescribing prophylactic antibiotics and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs specified in the agreement. The Collaborative Agreement should also contain agreed-upon referral parameters.

**Question:** Do EPDHs need to have a Collaborative Agreement to practice under their EPP?

**Answer:** No. However, the EPDH may not provide any of the services listed in the previous answer while working under the EPP unless they have a current Collaborative Agreement that has been approved by the OBD.

**Question:** What additional record keeping requirements exist for an EPDH who had entered into a Collaborative Agreement with a licensed dentist?

**Answer:** Every time an EPDH with a Collaborative Agreement provides any of the services referenced in the Collaborative Agreement, (administering local anesthesia; placing temporary restorations without excavation; and prescribing prophylactic antibiotics and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs), the EPDH must document in the patient's official chart the name of the licensed dentist on the Collaborative Agreement, and the date the Collaborative Agreement became effective. For more information, see OAR 818-035-0100.

**Question:** How do I obtain an Expanded Practice Permit?

**Answer:** There are two pathways to obtain an EPP; the application packets for both pathways are available on our website by clicking "Apply for a License" under the "Applicants" heading, and then scrolling down to "Dental Hygiene Expanded Practice Permit". Hygienists who have completed a course of study, before or after graduation from a dental hygiene program, which included 500 hours of practice on the populations described in ORS 680.205(1) should apply by Pathway Two. Hygienists who did not complete a program that included the necessary hours should apply by Pathway One. Pathway One involves completion of at least 2,500 hours of supervised dental hygiene clinical practice or clinical teaching hours, and completion of at least 40 hours of continuing education (CE) directly related to clinical dental hygiene or dental public health. The applicant may choose the CE courses, provided they are sponsored by CE Providers that have been approved by the OBD. The list of Board-Approved CE Providers for EPPs is available in the application packet, or by navigating to our website, clicking "Apply for License" under the "Applicants" heading, and then clicking "Approved CE Providers – Pathway 1" under "Dental Hygiene Expanded Practice Permit". A direct link is available by clicking [here](#).

**Question:** What are the most common mistakes made by dental hygienists attempting to obtain an EPP via Pathway One?

**Answer:** Most of the errors derive from misunderstanding the CE requirements. In order to count towards the 40-hour requirement, the CE must be (1) sponsored by CE Providers that have been approved by the Board – a list is available on our website; and (2) directly related to clinical dental hygiene or dental public health. Courses related to practice management and/or patient relations will not be counted towards the requirement.

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**Question:** Aside from the documents in the EPP application packets, what additional materials must be submitted with an EPP application?

**Answer:** A copy of the hygienist's current BLS for Healthcare Providers card, proof that the hygienist holds current professional liability insurance, and a check for the permit fee.

**Question:** How is the EPP renewed?

**Answer:** Once added to the dental hygienist's license, the EPP is renewed on the same schedule as the license. CE hours and renewal fees are not prorated.

**Question:** Are there any additional requirements for an EPDH that have not been mentioned above?

**Answer:** Yes. An EPDH must complete 36 hours of continuing education each renewal cycle. An EPDH must maintain professional liability insurance at all times, even when not practicing under the permit. An EPDH must, at least once each calendar year, refer each patient or resident to a dentist who is available to treat that patient or resident.

As always, you are welcome to contact the OBD with any questions you may have about continuing education, renewals, or any other topic. We can be reached at [information@oregondentistry.org](mailto:information@oregondentistry.org), or 971-673-3200. Our staff is happy to assist.