

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

H.B. 2993  
By: Villarreal  
Public Health  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

Currently, the Dental Practice Act allows dental hygienists to provide services outside of a dentist's office if services are provided in a nursing home or school-based clinic. The hygienist is limited to only one visit before the patient must be examined by a dentist.

As proposed, HB 2993 would expand the locations allowed under the Act to include Head Start programs and community health centers. The single visit restriction would be extended to multiple visits over the course of no more than one year, before the patient would have to be seen by a dentist.

Currently, there are not enough dentists visiting Head Start programs to meet the demand. Allowing dental hygienists to administer basic examinations and teach children dental hygiene practices, as well as apply fluoride varnish, will expand the number of children who will receive dental care. Fluoride varnish treatments ideally are administered several times (more often for at-risk populations), several months apart. The one-year time period will allow for full treatments to be administered by hygienists.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

### **ANALYSIS**

HB 2993 allows a licensed dentist to delegate a service, task, or procedure to a dental hygienist, without complying with Section 262.151(a)(2), Occupations Code, if the dental hygienist has at least two years' experience in the practice of dental hygiene and the service, task, or procedure is performed in a Head Start program or community health center.

The bill removes the requirement that a patient be examined by a dentist before a dental hygienist may perform a second set of delegated tasks or procedures. The bill sets forth that a dental hygienist may only perform delegated tasks or procedures with respect to a patient for one year unless the patient has been examined by a dentist.

The bill clarifies that tasks or procedures performed under the terms of Section 262.1515(a) do not have to be performed in a dental office or in certain alternate settings under the supervision of a supervising dentist.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 1, 2007.