

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

C.S.H.B. 456  
By: Villarreal  
Public Health  
Committee Report (Substituted)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

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

Currently, there are not enough dentists visiting community health centers to meet the demand for services. Allowing dental hygienists to administer basic examinations and to teach dental hygiene practices, as well as to apply fluoride varnish treatments, will increase the number of people who receive dental care. Fluoride varnish treatments are ideally administered several times over the course of several months, and more often for at-risk populations. Increasing the number of times in a six-month time period that a hygienist can provide services to at-risk patients will allow for full treatments to be administered.

C.S.H.B. 456 expands the locations where a hygienist is authorized to provide delegated services to include community health centers. The bill limits the period of time for which a hygienist is authorized to provide such services with respect to one patient to six months unless the patient has been examined by a dentist.

### **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**

C.S.H.B. 456 amends the Occupations Code to expand the locations for which a licensed dentist is authorized to delegate the performance of a service, task, or procedure to a qualified dental hygienist to include a community health center. The bill limits to six months the period of time during which a hygienist is authorized to perform a delegated service, task, or procedure with respect to a patient unless the patient has been examined by a dentist, rather than prohibiting the hygienist from performing a second set of delegated tasks or procedures until the patient has been examined by a dentist.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 1, 2009.

### **COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE**

C.S.H.B. 456 omits a provision in the original that includes a Head Start Program among the programs for which a dentist is authorized to delegate the performance of a service, task, or procedure to a qualified dental hygienist. The substitute differs from the original by limiting the duration of the period during which a hygienist is authorized to perform a delegated service, task, or procedure with respect to a patient to six months, rather than one year as in the original.