

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 97
By: Van de Putte
Public Health
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Currently, a dentist is authorized to delegate to a dental hygienist the provision of certain services in a nursing home or school-based clinic. There are, however, many at-risk, preschool age children who do not see a dentist regularly. Younger children have a better chance to combat tooth decay if they are taught dental hygiene at an early age and are allowed to be seen in a community health clinic, accompanied by a parent. The federal Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment Program, along with the Frew settlement, requires children who qualify for Medicaid to be seen regularly for prevention screening.

S.B. 97 amends current law relating to the authority of a dental hygienist to provide services in certain facilities. The bill authorizes a dentist to delegate to a dental hygienist duties to be performed at a community health clinic, such as basic oral hygiene, tooth decay prevention, and fluoride treatment.

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

S.B. 97 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.