



## **WDA Supports Greater Delegation of Duties to Dental Personnel** *Increasing Efficiency of the Dental Work Force*

As with most professions, dental professionals want to ensure we have an adequate supply of dentists in the future to meet the demand for dental services. **The Wisconsin Dental Association is currently working with the state Department of Health Services and Delta Dental of Wisconsin to conduct a research project that will provide an accurate prediction of our future dental work force needs.** We will share the results of this work force research with policymakers upon its completion.

**In the interim, the WDA is contemplating how to increase the capacity and efficiency of the current dental work force.** The Wisconsin Dentistry Examining Board (DEB) recently discussed the definition of “remediable procedures” and has reviewed the types of procedures it believes can currently be delegated. The WDA is planning to further clarify this issue with the DEB so we can best determine whether legislation or administrative rule changes will be the most effective means by which to **allow a greater range of preventive and restorative duties to be delegated to trained allied dental personnel.** The WDA would support greater delegation authority only as long as the dentist is required to remain on the premises and inspect the performance of all delegated procedures prior to the patient’s departure; this gives assurances to the patient that the procedures meet the clinical expectations of a licensed dentist.

In an equally important effort to safeguard the public, the **WDA believes dentists should be *prohibited* from delegating any dental surgery (i.e., intentional cutting of hard tissue - drilling of teeth and soft tissue - cutting of gums), diagnosis or treatment planning.** The types of procedures dentists would most often delegate under this proposal include such things as placement, carving and finishing of dental fillings once the dentist has removed (drilled out) the decayed tooth structure. The WDA envisions these procedures being delegated only to dental hygienists and/or dental assistants who have obtained an “expanded function restorative certificate”. Training programs for the restorative expanded function certificates would most likely be developed by the DEB and the programs are expected to be significant in length (12 months).

In states where expanded delegation of duties is allowed, dentists report improved productivity without an increase in quality of care issues. While we don’t believe this would be an answer to the dental Medicaid access issue, the WDA believes that a greater ability to delegate dental services to trained allied dental personnel will enhance efficiency of the current dental work force in our state. If you are interested in working with the WDA in pursuing these policy changes, please call Mara Brooks at 608-250-3442.

### *MISSION STATEMENT*

***The Wisconsin Dental Association advances the interests of its members and the dental profession by promoting professional excellence and quality oral health care for the public.***

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