

SUBJECT: Exemptions from dental licensing requirements

COMMITTEE: Public Health — favorable, with amendment

VOTE: 5 ayes — Berlanga, Hirschi, Coleman, Glaze, Maxey

0 nays

3 absent — Davila, Delisi, Janek

WITNESSES: For — Paul Colbert, Texas Dental Hygienists Association; Beverly Zinser, Texas Dental Association; Dale Hahn

Against — None

BACKGROUND : Under the Dental Practice Act, a variety of individuals who perform services without pay are not considered to be practicing dentistry and thus are exempt from licensing requirements. These individuals include faculty and students of reputable dental colleges, persons doing laboratory work on inert matter, physicians and surgeons legally licensed to practice medicine, licensed dental hygienists, members of a religion who practice healing by prayer, x-ray technicians, and dental interns and residents.

DIGEST: HB 1868 would add to the list of individuals exempted from licensing under the Dental Practice Act students of a dental hygiene program accredited by the American Dental Association and operated at an institution of higher education.

Students would have to be practicing under the supervision of a teacher or demonstrator who was a faculty member of the program, and serving in a clinic operated solely for the benefit of the program's school or in a government or non-profit clinic serving an underserved population.

HB 1868 would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house.

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- SUPPORTERS SAY:** HB 1868 would offer dental hygienists an opportunity to perform more complex and challenging dental work in a manner similar to dental students, who are allowed to perform many services while under the full supervision of a licensed dentist. Language to permit this type of work by dental hygienists was inadvertently omitted when the 74th Legislature enacted SB 18 by Moncrief, continuing the Texas State Board of Dental Examiners. Licensed dental hygienists already are on the list, as are dental students. There is no reason to exclude students of dental hygiene performing pro bono work in clinics.
- OPPONENTS SAY:** No apparent opposition.
- NOTES:** The committee amendment to HB 1868 would require student to be enrolled at an accredited institution of higher education and practice under the general supervision of a dentist.