

**REGULATORY RESEARCH COMMITTEE
VIRGINIA BOARD OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS
VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS**

INVITATION TO COMMENT ON DENTAL HYGIENIST SCOPE OF PRACTICE

Virginia Statute authorizes the Virginia Board of Health Professions to advise the Governor, the General Assembly, and Department of Health Professions' Director on matters related to the regulation or deregulation of health care professions and occupations and on scope of practice issues among the regulated health professions (see §54.1-2510 of the *Code of Virginia*).

Pursuant to a request from the Secretary of Health and Human Resources to facilitate implementation of the Affordable Care act, the Board, at its May 3, 2011 meeting, determined to review the scope of practice of, among other professions, dental hygienists. Board staff have conducted a review of the relevant literature and drafted preliminary policy options. The Board is now seeking public comment on the draft report and on policy options.

Attached to this invitation (by reference) are a draft summary of research to date. Persons providing comment may benefit by reviewing this document. It is available on the Board of health Professions website (<http://www.dhp.virginia.gov/bhp/>). Hard copies may be requested by contacting Board staff at 804-367-4528.

The Board will be reviewing dental hygienist scope of practice responsive to the standard evaluative criteria used to assess the need to regulate any health care occupation or professions in Virginia (i.e. "the Criteria"). However, since the practice of dental hygiene is already regulated in the Commonwealth, Criterion 7, "Least Restrictive Regulation" has special applicability to this review:

- (1) The risk of harm posed by the unregulated practice of the profession must be identifiable;
- (2) Specialized skills and training are needed which require assurance of initial and continued competency;
- (3) Autonomous practice exists for the profession which requires independent judgment and functioning;
- (4) The scope of practice is distinguishable from other regulated professions, despite possible overlapping professional duties, methods of examination, instrumentation, or therapeutic modality;
- (5) The economic cost to the public of restricting the supply of practitioners and cost of board and agency operations to regulate the profession are outweighed by the benefit to the public;
- (6) There are no alternatives to regulation which adequately protect the public; and
- (7) If regulations are required, the least burdensome level of regulation which will protect the public will be recommended.

A public hearing to receive comment on dental hygienist scope of practice in Virginia will be held on January 22, 2015 at 10:30 AM at the following address:

**Virginia Department of Health Professions
9960 Mayland Drive, 2nd Floor Conference Center, Board Room 2
Henrico, Virginia 23233-1463**

For map and directions, the following link is provided <http://www.dhp.virginia.gov/about/directions.htm>. Documentation is available on the Board's website: <http://www.dhp.virginia.gov/bhp/>. Comments should be framed so as to respond to the issues described in the Criteria

Written comment will be accepted until 5:00 p.m. on February 10, 2015 **and** should be sent to Justin Crow, MPA at the Virginia Board of Health Professions, 9960 Mayland Drive, Suite 300, Henrico, VA 23233-1463. Comment may also be sent via e-mail to Justin.Crow@dhp.virginia.gov or faxed to (804) 527-4471.