



December 21, 2017

Dear Nebraska dental teams,

On March 29, 2017, the Governor signed into law Legislative Bill 18 (LB 18), which amends sections of the Dentistry Practice Act. One major change is the creation of a license for Nebraska dental assistants. New regulations are being developed for this new profession, but final regulations will not be in place for the changes authorized under LB 18 as of the operative date of January 1, 2018. However, the legislation provides specific requirements for applicants seeking an initial license as a dental assistant in Nebraska and the Department will begin issuing dental assistant licenses after January 1, 2018. This letter provides an overview of what LB 18 means for dental assistants in Nebraska, the requirements to become a licensed dental assistant, and where to find more information.

The requirements for an unlicensed dental assistant to perform dental x-rays and coronal polishing have not changed. Beginning January 1, 2018, all dental assistants may apply topical local anesthesia when under the indirect supervision of a licensed dentist. Per Neb. Rev. Stat. § 38-1110, indirect supervision means the supervising licensed dentist is physically on the premises during the procedure. In addition to applying topical local anesthesia, all dental assistants with a valid board-approved CPR certification may monitor nitrous oxide analgesia when under the indirect supervision of a licensed dentist. A licensed dental assistant has demonstrated their qualifications and may perform all procedures authorized for a dental assistant.

Qualification to become licensed as a dental assistant may be through education or experience. An applicant must be one of the following: a graduate of a Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) accredited dental assisting program, a dental assistant with at least 1,500 hours of experience (verification form enclosed) within the last five years, or a person who received similar training or education while serving in the armed forces of the United States. In addition to proof of meeting either the education or experience qualification, an applicant will need to provide a completed application with fee payment and documentation of:

- Age (19 years old or older)
- Citizenship/Lawful presence
- Graduation from high school (or equivalent, see <https://www.education.ne.gov/aded/>)
- Results of Certification Exam for Dental Assistants (CDA) sent directly from the Dental Assisting National Board (DANB) to the Licensure Unit
- Passing score on the Nebraska jurisprudence exam

In addition, the legislation provides for permits related to expanded functions for both licensed dental assistants and licensed dental hygienists (licensed dental hygienists will receive a separate letter explaining their permits at a later date). Once licensed, a dental assistant will be able to apply for additional permits to perform various competencies. A licensed dental assistant, with the completion of board-approved education and holding a permit issued by the Licensure Unit for each additional competency, may:

- Take dental impressions for fixed prostheses
- Take dental impressions and make minor adjustments for removable prostheses

- Cement prefabricated fixed prostheses on primary teeth
- Monitor and administer nitrous oxide analgesia (valid healthcare provider CPR certification required)

As you can see, a licensed dental assistant can tailor their scope of practice into one that greatly benefits both their dental team and their career.

Finally, a licensed dental assistant who has completed 1,500 hours of experience as a licensed dental assistant may also apply for expanded function permits. In addition to meeting the experience requirement, a licensed dental assistant must complete an application and submit documentation of board-approved education and testing. Once a permit is issued by the Licensure Unit for each expanded function competency, the permit holder may place restorative level one simple restorations (one surface) and restorative level two complex restorations (multiple surfaces). Because of the experience requirement, the Licensure Unit does not anticipate issuing expanded function permits to licensed dental assistants before **October 1, 2018**.

Dental assistants can continue to be unlicensed, but cannot perform procedures authorized for licensed dental assistants and expanded function dental assistants without a license or permit. We invite you to visit our dental professions website (<http://dhhs.ne.gov/publichealth/Pages/crlDentistryIndex.aspx>). From there you can find applications, information, helpful links, and official regulations. The Dentistry Practice Act is available online at <http://nebraskalegislature.gov/laws/browse-chapters.php?chapter=38> and is covered by sections 38-1101 to 38-1152. If you have any questions or concerns, contact our office at (402) 471-2118 or at DHHS.MedicalOffice@nebraska.gov.

Sincerely,

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