

**VIRGINIA BOARD OF DENTISTRY
LICENSING WORKGROUP MEETING MINUTES
August 22, 2025**

- TIME AND PLACE:** The meeting of the Virginia Board of Dentistry was called to order at 9:36 a.m., on August 22, 2025, at the Perimeter Center, 9960 Mayland Drive, in Board Room 4, Henrico, Virginia 23233.
- PRESIDING:** Sultan E. Chaudhry, D.D.S., Chairman
- MEMBERS PRESENT:** Alf Hendricksen, D.D.S.
Emelia McLennan, Dental Hygienist
- STAFF PRESENT:** Jamie C. Sacksteder, Executive Director
Erin T. Weaver, Deputy Executive Director
Debora Farrar, Office Assistant
Tammy Luedecke, Office Assistant
Arne Owens, Director, Department of Health Professions
Yetty Shobo, Director of Healthcare Workforce Data Center
Erin Barrett, Director of legislative and Regulatory Affairs
- OTHERS PRESENT:** Marge Green, Virginia Dental Hygienists' Association
Benjamin Traynham, Virginia Dental Association
- Ms. Sacksteder read the emergency evacuation procedures.
- PUBLIC COMMENT:** Dr. Chaudhry explained the parameters for public comment and opened the public comment period. The Committee also received written comments from Ryan Dunn and Jessica Suedbeck.
- Paul Logan, Virginia Dental Association** – Dr. Logan concurred with the written statement provided to the Committee by Ryan Dunn, CEO, Virginia Dental Association. Dr. Logan highlighted the recent change adopted by the Commission on Dental Accreditation to permit qualified internationally educated dentists and dental hygienists to serve as faculty at CODA-accredited dental hygiene programs.
- Marlene Rhodes, Dental Hygienist** – Ms. Rhodes stated that working together is key because it affords more opportunity for increasing budgets to allow for increased faculty and graduates from dental hygiene programs.
- Cathy Berard, Virginia Dental Hygienists' Association** – Ms. Berard encouraged the Board to use the Board of Medicine's license by endorsement as a pathway model for dental hygienists. She would also like to remove the stipulation of clinical practice time that currently exists under license by credential.
- Tracey Martin, Virginia Dental Hygienists' Association** – Read allowed a public comment on behalf of W. Lee Melvin, DMD who is an instructor at an unnamed dental hygiene school, comment stated that internationally trained dentists should be required to complete 1 or 2 years of CODA accredited dental hygiene education; pass dental hygiene examinations; and prove

English competency prior to being licensed to practice. Standardized education and training, plus demonstration of clinical proficiency ensures the standard of care for patients. Ms. Martin stated (on behalf of W. Lee Melvin DMD), that increasing the number of positions at existing dental hygiene programs is a preferred route to addressing the dental hygiene shortage.

Dr. Chaudhry stated that the Committee heard comments from all those who registered to comment and closed the Public Comment Period.

**LEGISLATION AND
REGULATION:**

SB1475 - Ms. Barrett informed the Committee that SB1475 directed the Board to convene a workgroup to assess expedited pathways for licensure for dentists and dental hygienists. The work group would review the licensure by credentialing statues governing dentists and dental hygienists and make recommendations on how the statutes and/or regulations can be updated to reflect an expedited pathway for licensure; and also study options for and make recommendations on a pathway for qualified internationally trained dentists to practice dental hygiene under the supervision of a licensed dentist.

PRESENTATION - HWDC:

Review of 2025 Dentist and Dental Hygienist Workforce Survey - Dr. Shobo provided a presentation regarding the workforce of dentists and dental hygienists.

Dentistry Workforce: Dr. Shobo stated there is an upward trend in the number of dental licensees; increase in the number in the workforce and in full-time equivalency units. Compared to the national average, Virginia is doing better regarding the ratio of dentists to the population. Highest concentration of dentists is in Northern Virginia and Central Virginia.

Dental Hygiene Workforce: Dr. Shobo stated there is an increase in dental hygiene licensees. About 40% hold a bachelor's degree. The highest concentration of dental hygienists is in Northern Virginia, but looking at per capita distribution, there is a higher per capita concentration of full-time equivalency units in the Hampton Roads area. The ratio of dentists to dental hygienists is least favorable in Northern Virginia, but there is a saturation of dental hygienists compared to dentists in the Hampton Roads area.

**COMMITTEE DISCUSSION
TOPICS:**

Credentialing/Endorsement/Reciprocity – Dentists – Ms. Sacksteder and Ms. Barrett confirmed that Credentialing, Reciprocity, and Endorsement have the same meaning in Virginia. Ms. Sacksteder informed the Committee that the Board cannot make changes to credentialing requirements because those requirements are established in law, not in regulation. Ms. Barrett added that the Board does have the option to advocate for legislative changes—specifically, to ask the General Assembly to either lower or eliminate the active practice requirements currently set in law. If those requirements were removed from the law and placed solely in regulation, the Board would then have the authority to modify them through its own regulatory process, similar to the approach taken by the Board of Medicine. Mr. Traynham stated the VDA did not have a position about a recommendation to lower active practice requirements for licensure by

credentials, but noted it is important that there is some requirement of active practice. Ms. Sacksteder reviewed active practice requirements from other states. She also noted that Virginia, as a member state of the Dentist and Dental Hygiene Compact, does not impose active practice requirements under the terms of the compact. She also explained that internationally trained dentists must complete a post-doctoral program that includes a clinical component to qualify for dental licensure in Virginia.

Recommendation: After thorough discussion, the Committee did not make recommended changes to the active practice requirements for credentialing/endorsement/reciprocity of dentists

Credentialing/Endorsement/Reciprocity – Dental Hygienists – Ms. Sacksteder and Ms. Barrett confirmed that Credentialing, Reciprocity, and Endorsement have the same meaning in Virginia. Ms. Sacksteder informed the Committee that the active practice requirements for dental hygiene are not established by statute, but rather exist solely within the Board’s regulations. As a result, the workgroup may recommend changes to these requirements, which the Board could consider and implement without needing legislative action from the General Assembly. Ms. Green stated that the VDHA would support recommending a change to active practice requirements that removes the active practice requirement entirely for dental hygienists. She stated that the additional requirements for licensure by credentials are adequate to ensure public safety, and that easing the active practice requirement would help attract qualified professionals to Virginia, where they are urgently needed. Mr. Traynham stated the VDA did not have a recommendation regarding active practice requirements for dental hygienists.

Recommendation: After thorough discussion, the Committee did not come to a consensus to make recommended changes to the active practice requirements for credentialing/endorsement/reciprocity of dental hygienists.

Internationally Trained Dentist - Ms. Sacksteder informed the Committee that Florida and Massachusetts are the only states that currently allow for internationally trained dentists to practice dental hygiene. However, because Massachusetts only recently passed the law for internationally trained dentists to practice as dental hygienists during its last legislative session, the corresponding regulations have not yet been promulgated. As a result, their process cannot be fairly evaluated at this time. Ms. McLennan stated that CODA requirements would ensure that everyone would meet the standard of care and provide patient safety. Mr. Traynham stated that the VDA would support the requirement of taking/passing both clinical and national exam, but would question the need for a CODA accredited program. He also suggested that internationally trained dentists could complete a CODA-accredited refresher course as an alternative to occupying a highly sought-after spot in a CODA-accredited dental hygiene program. However, Ms. Sacksteder noted that current law would need to be amended to permit this option, as refresher courses require hands-on clinical training, which is not currently authorized for such candidates. Ms. Green expressed concern that passing exams alone does not guarantee adherence to patient care

standards. She also cautioned that the public might mistakenly assume that an internationally trained dentist holds equivalent credentials to a U.S.-trained dental hygienist, potentially leading to confusion about qualifications. The Committee discussed the pros and cons of requiring an internationally trained dentist to take a CODA accredited program as opposed to taking the ADEX exam or refresher course to ensure patient safety. Review of potential requirements for a foreign trained dentist pathway to licensure as a dental hygienist included:

- Passing the national exam and/or regional clinical examinations
- Evaluation of a degree/credentials from international school through an evaluation service (such as World Education Services, Educational Credential Evaluators, or National Association of Credential Evaluation Services).
- Proof of licensure and work history (potentially) in another country
- Passage of an English proficiency exam (TOEFL or ELTS)

While the discussion encouraged exploring various licensure pathways, dental hygiene representatives only supported internationally trained dentists becoming licensed as dental hygienists in Virginia if they followed the traditional dental hygiene licensure process. They did not support recognizing prior training or experience from those individuals. Ms. Green stated that she believes internationally trained dentists are only qualified to take the clinical exam for dentists, not for dental hygienists.

Recommendation: After a thorough discussion, the Committee could not come to a consensus to make recommendations to create a pathway for internationally trained dentists to work as dental hygienists.

DECISION:

Dr. Chaudhry advised that Ms. Sacksteder and other DHP staff will report the findings of the Licensing Workgroup to the General Assembly as required by SB1475.

ADJOURNMENT:

With all business concluded, the Committee adjourned at 1:45 p.m.

Sultan E. Chaudhry, D.D.S., Committee Chair

Jamie C. Sacksteder, Executive Director

Date

Date