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SENATE BILL NO. 178

Offered January 14, 2026

Prefiled January 9, 2026

A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 54.1-2708.5 and 54.1-2729.01 of the Code of Virginia, relating to preventative dental assistants; licensing.

Patrons—Locke, Pillion, Craig, Favola, Head, Pekarsky and Srinivasan

Referred to Committee on Education and Health

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 54.1-2708.5 and 54.1-2729.01 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 54.1-2708.5. Digital scans for use in the practice of dentistry; practice of digital scan technicians.

A. No person other than a dentist, dental hygienist, dental assistant I, dental assistant II, *preventative dental assistant*, digital scan technician, or other person under the direction of a dentist shall obtain dental scans for use in the practice of dentistry.

B. A digital scan technician who obtains dental scans for use in the practice of teledentistry shall work under the direction of a dentist who is (i) licensed by the Board to practice dentistry in the Commonwealth, (ii) accessible and available for communication and consultation with the digital scan technician at all times during the patient interaction, and (iii) responsible for ensuring that the digital scan technician has a program of training approved by the Board for such purpose. All protocols and procedures for the performance of digital scans by digital scan technicians and evidence that a digital scan technician has complied with the training requirements of the Board shall be made available to the Board upon request.

§ 54.1-2729.01. Practice of dental assistants.

A. A person who is employed to assist a licensed dentist or dental hygienist by performing duties not otherwise restricted to the practice of a dentist, dental hygienist, ~~or~~ dental assistant II, *or preventative dental assistant* as prescribed in regulations promulgated by the Board may practice as a dental assistant I.

B. A person who (i) has met the educational and training requirements prescribed by the Board; (ii) holds a certification from a credentialing organization recognized by the American Dental Association; and (iii) has met any other qualifications for registration as prescribed in regulations promulgated by the Board may practice as a dental assistant II. A dental assistant II may perform duties not otherwise restricted to the practice of a dentist or dental hygienist under the direction of a licensed dentist that are reversible, intraoral procedures specified in regulations promulgated by the Board.

C. *Notwithstanding subsection A, a dental assistant I or dental assistant II with a minimum of 1,800 hours of clinical experience may be certified as a preventative dental assistant, provided that:*

1. The preventative dental assistant has undergone training, consisting of at least 120 hours of didactic and clinical manikin or human subject training in the areas specified in this subsection (i) by a licensed dentist or licensed dental hygienist employed or engaged by a licensed dentist and implementing an educational curriculum provided by a statewide association that is exempt under 26 U.S.C. § 501(c)(6) of the Internal Revenue Code and primarily represents dentists licensed in the Commonwealth, (ii) by a federal program approved by or associated with the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs or U.S. Indian Health Services or while serving on active military duty, or (iii) by an existing dental assistant education program; and

2. The licensed dentist who provides, supervises, or confirms the training of the preventative dental assistant certifies under oath that the dental assistant has completed the training described in subdivision 1, as well as at least 20 supervised full-mouth supragingival scaling procedures with consent of the patients. Documentation of such certification shall be maintained in writing or electronically by the licensed dentist and produced to the Board upon request. Such certifications and documentation thereof may be relied upon and maintained by subsequent employers of a preventative dental assistant. A licensed dentist may certify any preventative dental assistant who presents evidence of such training completed pursuant to clause (ii) of subdivision 1.

A licensed dentist shall not indirectly supervise more than two preventative dental assistants at any one time while such assistants are performing polishing or supragingival scaling patients.

D. A preventative dental assistant may, in addition to the duties authorized for a dental assistant I or dental assistant II, perform the following under indirect supervision of a licensed dentist:

1. *Placing and finishing restoration material after a dentist prepares a tooth for restoration;*
2. *Taking impressions;*
3. *Creating and fitting temporizations;*
4. *Packing cord;*

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SB178

- 59 5. *Removing cement from crowns;*
60 6. *Adjusting dentures and other removable oral appliances;*
61 7. *Removing sutures and dressings;*
62 8. *Performing supragingival scaling with hand and ultrasonic scalers;*
63 9. *Performing coronal polishing;*
64 10. *Preparing dental armamentarium; and*
65 11. *Explaining periodontal etiology and classification to a patient.*
66 **2. That regulations promulgated by the Board of Dentistry pursuant to this act shall be exempt from**
67 **the requirements of the Administrative Process Act (§ 2.2-4000 et seq. of the Code of Virginia).**