

# HEALTH SERVICES POLICY & PROCEDURE MANUAL

North Carolina Department Of Public Safety  
Prison

SECTION: Care and Treatment of  
Offender - Dental Services

POLICY # TX V-10

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SUBJECT: Dental Hygiene Under Direction

EFFECTIVE DATE: May 2014  
SUPERCEDES DATE: May 2013

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## References

Related ACA Standards

4<sup>th</sup> Edition Standards for Adult Correctional  
Institutions 4-4383

## PURPOSE

To permit qualified dental hygienists to practice dental hygiene in the absence of the facility dentist.

## POLICY

North Carolina law permits dental hygienists to practice under direction when employed by a State government dental health program and after having received special training as defined in 21 NCAC 16W. North Carolina Department of Correction Dental Services is a qualified program under this regulation.

Working under direction means the hygienist is working without a dentist present. Work is limited to patients that have written orders for specific hygiene services. This program shall be utilized, whenever feasible, to increase efficiency and productivity at facility dental clinics staffed with a hygienist qualified to work under direction.

## PROCEDURE

The following procedures will be followed when implementing dental hygiene under direction:

1. Hygienists employed by North Carolina Department of Correction with five years experience in clinical dental hygiene shall receive training through the Oral Health Branch of North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health, such that they meet the qualifications of a Public Health Hygienist (4,000 hours performing primarily prophylaxis or periodontal debridement under the supervision of a duly licensed dentist is equivalent to five years experience in clinical dental hygiene).
2. Hygienists shall renew their CPR certification and obtain six hours of continuing education in medical emergencies annually.
3. A pool of direction-eligible hygiene patients shall be maintained such that hygiene practice may continue when the facility dentist is absent.
4. As described in 21 NCAC 16W .0101, clinical procedures delegated to the hygienist must have the following documentation:
  - a. A written order from a licensed dentist in the patient's chart, within 60 days, specifying the delegated treatment
  - b. The dentist's evaluation of the patient will include: a complete oral examination, thorough health history and diagnosis of the patient's condition
5. Delegated treatments are strictly limited to those procedures that may be performed by a licensed hygienist as determined by the North Carolina State Board of Dental Examiners

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6. Prior to initiating hygiene under direction, the dental facility staff shall discuss security and operational issues with the facility superintendent or designee and strictly adhere to any special provisions required when the hygienist is working during the dentist's absence.
7. If present, dental assistants shall assist hygienists when they work under direction.
8. Administration of the hygiene under direction program is the responsibility of the facility dentist and s/he will ensure that it is performed according to the rules and regulations of the North Carolina State Board of Dental Examiners and any requirements set forth by the facility administration.
9. Clinical procedures performed under direction will be reported in the designated area on the monthly activity report.

*Paula Y. Smith, M.D.*

7/11/2014

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Paula Y. Smith, MD, Chief of Health Services      Date

SOR: Dental Committee