STATE OF MAINE
Board of Dental Practice

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DENTAL THERAPY - WRITTEN PRACTICE AGREEMENT

Pursuant to 32 M.R.S. §§ 18371(5), 18345(2)(C) and Board Rules, Chapter 2, Section V(E) a dental hygienist seeking to practice as a dental therapist must first submit an application for a dental therapy authority, demonstrate that the qualifications have been met, and submit a signed, written practice agreement between the supervising dentist and the dental therapist, which includes documentation showing that each provider is employed by the same practice/facility.

A written practice agreement must include the following:

(1) Name, date and signature of the supervising dentist and dental therapist;

(2) Practice settings and locations where services may be provided;

(3) Any limitations on the services that may be provided by the dental therapist, including the level of supervision required by the supervising dentist;

   A. List the limitations on the services that may be provided by the dental therapist;

   B. List the services that are within the scope of practice of the dental therapist and that are restricted or prohibited by the written practice agreement;

(4) Age and procedure specific practice protocols, including case selection criteria, assessment guidelines and imaging frequency;

   A. Provide a description of age specific protocols;

   B. Provide a description of procedure specific protocols;

   C. Provide a description of case selection criteria;

   D. Provide a description of assessment guidelines;

   E. Provide a description of imaging frequency guidelines;

(5) A procedure for obtaining informed consent and creating and maintaining dental records in accordance with Board Rule Chapter 12 for the patients who are treated by the dental therapist;

(6) A plan for review of patient records by the supervising dentist and dental therapist;

(7) A plan to manage dental and medical emergencies and reporting incidents in accordance with Board Rule Chapter 12 in each practice setting where the dental therapist provides care;

(8) A quality assurance plan for monitoring care provided by the dental therapist, including patient care review, referral follow-up and a quality assurance chart review;

A. Provide a description of the patient care review;

B. Provide a description of the plan for referral follow-up;

C. Provide a description of the quality assurance chart review;

(9) Protocols for administering and dispensing medications authorized under, including the specific conditions and circumstances under which these medications are to be administered and dispensed;

A. The dental therapist may provide, dispense and administer anti-inflammatories, nonprescription analgesics, antimicrobials, antibiotic and anticaries materials within the parameters of the written practice agreement, within the scope of practice of a dental therapist, and with the authorization of the supervising dentist;

B. The written agreement must reflect the process in which the dentist authorizes the prescription, and the dental therapist provides, dispenses and administers these medications;

C. A dental therapist is prohibited from providing, dispensing or administering controlled substances;

(10) Criteria for providing care to patients with specific medical conditions or complex medical histories, including requirements for consultation prior to initiating care;

(11) Criteria for the dental therapist to supervise dental hygienists (no more than 2) and unlicensed dental personnel (no more than 3) in any one practice setting to the extent permitted in a written practice agreement;

(12) Specific written protocols to govern situations in which the dental therapist encounters a patient who requires treatment that exceeds the authorized scope of practice;

A. The supervising dentist must ensure that a dentist is available to the dental therapist for timely consultation during treatment if needed;

B. The supervising dentist shall arrange for another dentist or specialist to provide any services needed by a patient of a dental therapist supervised by that dentist that are beyond the scope of practice of the dental therapist and that the supervising dentist is unable to provide;

C. The supervising dentist is responsible for all authorized services and procedures performed by the dental therapist pursuant to the written practice agreement;

(13) The services and procedures that the dental therapist may provide, including the level of supervision;

A. Protocol for the oral evaluation and assessment of dental disease, and for the formulation of an individualized treatment plan by the dental therapist and authorized by the supervising dentist;

i. The dental therapist shall complete an oral evaluation and assessment of dental disease for the patient;

ii. The dental therapist shall collaborate with the dentist in the formulation and authorization of the individualized treatment plan;

iii. The authorization process may include indirect methods such as standing orders, written prescriptive orders, emergency palliative protocols, teledentistry, additional electronic methods for consultation, and other definitive, non-emergency protocols, all contained within the written practice agreement;

iv. In addition, the authorization process may occur simultaneously with providing dental care by the dental therapist, and within the parameters of the written practice agreement in accordance with the scope of practice of a dental therapist;

v. The dental therapist shall refer patients in accordance with the agreement to another qualified dental or health care professional to receive needed services that exceed the scope of the dental therapist;

vi. The dental therapist shall keep a copy of the written practice agreement and make a copy available to patients of the dental therapist upon request;

B. Protocol for the supervising dentist;

i. The collaborating dentist shall perform the comprehensive oral evaluation, determine the diagnosis(es), and formulate the individualized treatment plan upon referral of the patient by the dental therapist;

ii. The dentist shall collaborate with the dental therapist for the provision of dental care as limited by the dental therapist scope of practice under and level of supervision, and if authorized in advance by the supervising dentist;

iii. The supervising dentist shall keep a copy of the written practice agreement and make a copy available to patients of the dental therapist upon request

(14) A plan for the dental therapist to conduct urgent management of dental trauma, perform suturing, extract primary teeth and perform nonsurgical extractions of periodontally diseased permanent teeth to the extent permitted in a written practice agreement;

(15) A plan for the dental therapist to perform simple cavity preparations, restorations and simple extractions to the extent permitted in a written practice agreement; and

(16) A plan for the dental therapist to administer local anesthesia and nitrous oxide analgesia to the extent permitted in a written practice agreement.

A separate written practice agreement must be submitted for each collaboration with a supervising dentist. As a condition to renew the dental therapy practice authority, a dental hygienist must submit a current written practice agreement with the Board.

Written practice agreements must be signed and maintained by the supervising dentist and the dental therapist. Revisions to a written practice agreement must be documented in a new practice agreement and filed with the Board within 10 days of the change. Similarly, termination of a practice agreement must be documented and submitted to the Board within 10 days of the change.

The Board may request additional information or clarification for information provided in the written practice agreement.