150-5-.03 Supervision of Dental Hygienists.

(1) Any reference to a dental hygienist in this rule means a Georgia licensed dental hygienist.

(2) Direct supervision as it pertains to procedures delegated to a dental hygienist shall mean that a dentist licensed in Georgia is in the dental office or treatment facility, personally diagnoses the condition to be treated, personally authorizes the procedures and remains in the dental office or treatment facility while the procedures are being performed by the dental hygienist and, before dismissal of the patient, examines the patient.

(3) A dental hygienist shall perform his or her duties only under the direct supervision of a duly licensed dentist who is licensed to practice in the state of Georgia.

(a) The requirement of direct supervision shall not apply to the educational training of dental hygiene students at an institution approved by the Board and the Commission on Dental Accreditation of the American Dental Association.

(b) The requirement of direct supervision shall not apply to the performance of dental hygiene services at approved dental facilities of the Department of Public Health, county boards of health, or the Department of Corrections. A supervising dentist shall assume responsibility for authorizing services that may be performed by dental hygienists as defined in subsections (5)(a) through (g) of this rule, at such locations, either in person, through videoconferencing or by written standing orders or Department of Public Health, county boards of health, or the Department of Corrections protocols.

(c) Approved dental facilities of the Department of Public Health, county boards of health and Department of Corrections shall submit to the Board of Dentistry for approval written protocol which identifies how duties are delegated to dental hygienists. Changes to such approved protocol must be resubmitted to the Board of Dentistry for review and approval.

(d) The requirement of direct supervision shall not apply to the performance of dental hygienists providing dental screenings in settings which include schools, hospitals, and clinics and state, county, local, and federal public health programs. Other health fair settings must be pre-approved by the board.

(4) No dentist shall supervise more practicing dental hygienists than he or she can safely and reasonably supervise in order to ensure that the health, safety, and welfare of patients are protected.

(5) In addition to routine duties and the procedures of any of the operations or procedures authorized in O.C.G.A. § 43-11-74, the following activities may be performed by a dental hygienist working under the direct supervision of a dentist:

(a) All the duties that are usually performed by a dental assistant pursuant to Title 43, Chapter 11, Article 4 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated and Chapter 150-9 of the Rules of the Georgia Board of Dentistry, under the limitations and stipulations set forth in Title 43, Chapter 11, Article 3 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated and Chapter 150-5 of the Rules of the Georgia Board of Dentistry.

(b) Take and mount oral x-rays;

(c) Apply medications and/or solutions approved by the Board and prescribed by the dentist that can be applied by methods approved by the Board, be that by irrigation, tray, or insertion of bioresorbable materials;

(d) Remove calcareous deposits, secretions, and stains from the surfaces of teeth. Ultrasonic technologies are authorized for use by dental hygienists;

(e) Utilize techniques and materials necessary for the application of sealant(s) to pits of and fissures of teeth;
(f) Perform root planing and curettage with hand instruments; and
(g) Perform periodontal probing.
(6) Nothing in these rules shall be construed as authorizing dental hygienists to utilize other techniques in the course of the performance of their duties, otherwise authorized by these rules. Only dentists licensed by the Georgia Board of Dentistry shall be authorized to perform procedures involving laser technology which alters tissue, creates thermal effect, or is intended to cut, coagulate, photocoagulate, vaporize, or ablate essentially any soft or hard tissues of the body. Additionally only dentists licensed by the Board shall be authorized to perform procedures utilizing air abrasive technology, which is normally intended for cavity preparation or enamel removal. This is to be distinguished from "micro etching" and "air polishing" technologies which are intended for stain removal and roughening the surfaces of enamel to enhance bonding, similar to acid etching, (i.e., Micro etching and air polishing are technologies authorized for use by dental hygienists).