

Submission regarding amendments to Scope of Practice Registration Standard and Guidelines

The key requirement of the standard is that all dental practitioners must only perform those dental procedures for which they have been formally educated and trained in programs of study approved by the National Board, and in which they are competent.

Through the standard the National Board is aiming to provide certainty to all divisions of dental practitioners on their scope of practice, and provide protection and certainty to the public in recognising the divisions of dental practitioners and their scope of practice.

Although many of the proposed changes appear to be directed at clarifying the scope of practice for dental hygienists, dental therapists and oral health therapists, it is the view of the ASO (NSW) that in line with the National Board's Aim there also needs to be some clarification of the scope of practice for dental practitioners in relation to specialists. In keeping with the recognition of the team approach it is also the view of the ASO (NSW) that all divisions of the dental profession need to embrace and practice with a team approach in order to provide the patient with the best treatment possible.

Given that dental practitioners are required to only perform those dental procedures for which they have been formally educated and trained (and in which they are competent) the ASO (NSW) has some serious concerns regarding the practice of orthodontics by dentists.

The orthodontic components of dental training programs (as distinct from specialist training programs) approved by the National Board aim to provide an introduction to orthodontics with some basic practical knowledge of treatment planning and the use of various orthodontic appliances. Given that in order to become registered as an Orthodontic specialist 2-3 further years of training is required it is concerning the number of dentist performing orthodontics. Under the scope of practice is the training provided to dentists sufficient to qualify them as competent? Are the various unregulated orthodontic courses for dentists sufficient to confer competency?

Is it in the best interests of the public to allow the confusion between the roles of dentists and specialists to continue and further is it within the spirit of a "team approach" to allow such practices to continue?