

18 June 2013

DBA Scope of practice review

Herewith the feedback from the UQ School of Dentistry on the public consultation paper on the draft Scope of practice registration standard and draft Guidelines - Scope of practice registration standard. Overall the School supports Option 2, with the following additional comments:

1. The School notes and endorses the key requirement in the standard that dental therapists, dental hygienists, oral health therapists and dental prosthetists 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.
2. The School points out that the ADC approved lists of competencies of new graduates from dental therapy, dental hygiene, oral health therapy and dental prosthetics programs provides a baseline for establishing the range of activities which fall within the scope of practice for each group.
3. The need for a formal and structured professional relationship with a dentist provides the appropriate referral pathway for cases and treatments beyond the scope of the dental therapist, dental hygienist or oral health therapist, or dental prosthetist. This emphasizes the team concept. The School believes that a template for such a relationship document would be very worthwhile. Given the move to such formal relationships, the School believes that the use of the term "supervision" would no longer be necessary. Thus, the suggested Option 2b is supported.
4. The School supports the wording "Dentists and/or specialist dentists work as independent practitioners who may practise all parts of dentistry included in the definition of dentistry."
5. The School argues that the following be retained "Dentists may supply and fit dental appliances for the treatment of sleep disorders. They must work in cooperation with the patient's medical practitioner who is responsible for the medical aspects of the management of sleep disordered breathing."
6. The School agrees that formal approval (i.e. by the DBA or delegated authority) is needed for continuing professional development (CPD) courses which extend the scope of practice for a dental therapist, dental

hygienist or oral health therapist, or dental prosthetist . Only CPD courses which have met this formal requirement should be able to be recognised for scope extension, and advertised as such. They should only be offered by established tertiary education institutions.

7. The age restriction for dental therapists and oral health therapists when practicing dental therapy on persons of all ages relates to the training which they received – either during their primary training or at an approved scope extension course subsequently.
8. Each type of dental professional should ensure that their employment situation takes into account their scope of practice – i.e. that employers of dental therapists, dental hygienists, dental prosthetists and oral health therapists seek information about the scope of practice based on the ADC listing and any subsequent completions of scope extension courses.
9. The view of the School is that any considered extension in the area of dental therapy practice must be limited to simple restorations in the teeth of adults which do not require complex retention methods beyond normal cavity preparation, on teeth which do not require endodontic treatment for pulpal pathosis. Such work would be best done when there is a dentist on site in the same facility. The School emphasizes that the primary function of these dental professions (i.e. prevention of dental diseases, oral health promotion, and minimally interventions) must remain their primary focus within the profession. The School would welcome detailed information from DBA on the education and training requirements for oral health therapists and dental therapists on the treatment of patients of all ages, to inform the development of its training programs.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Laurence Walsh', written in dark ink on a light background.

Professor Laurence J Walsh
Head, School of Dentistry