

DIRECTOR'S REPORT ON THE TWO DENTAL AUXILIARIES PROPOSALS TO LICENSE DENTAL ASSISTANTS AND ENHANCE THE SCOPE OF PRACTICE OF DENTAL HYGIENISTS

From: Courtney Phillips, CEO and Acting Director of the Division of Public Health, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services

To: The Speaker of the Nebraska Legislature
The Chairperson of the Executive Board of the Legislature
The Chairperson and Members of the Legislative Health and Human Services Committee

Date: September 11, 2015

Introduction

The Regulation of Health Professions Act (as defined in Neb. Rev. Stat., Section 71-6201, et. seq.) is commonly referred to as the Credentialing Review Program. The Department of Health and Human Services Division of Public Health administers the Act. As the Acting Director of this Division, I am presenting this report under the authority of this Act.

Description of the Issue under Review

There were two proposals considered during this review. One was presented by the Nebraska Dental Assistants Association (NDAA) and the Nebraska Dental Association (NDA). The second proposal considered was presented by the Nebraska Dental Hygienists Association (NDHA). The applicant groups are seeking to license Dental Assistants and enhance the scope of practice of Dental Hygienists. The full text of these proposals can be found on the link under Dental Auxiliaries at http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/reg_admcr.aspx Summaries of these proposals can be found in the reports on these issues by the technical review committee and the Board of Health.

Summary of Technical Committee and Board of Health Recommendations

The members of the Dental Auxiliaries Technical Review Committee recommended against approval of the NDHA proposal via formal roll call vote.

The members of the Dental Auxiliaries Technical Review Committee recommended approval of the NDAA/NDA proposal via formal roll call vote.

The members of the full Board of Health voted to approve the advice presented to them by the Board's Credentialing Review Committee which was to recommend approval of the NDA/NDAA proposal.

The Director's Recommendations on the Proposal

I have reviewed the record and the recommendations made by both the technical review committee and the Board of Health on the two dental auxiliaries proposals as well as the actions taken on the credentialing review criteria by these two review bodies pertinent to these proposals. Their reports represent the most practical and prudent approaches to addressing the outstanding issues surrounding dental practice in Nebraska today. Both the technical review committee and the Board of Health were in agreement that the proposal from the Nebraska Dental Association and the Nebraska Dental Assistants Association (NDA/NDAA) provides for substantive additions to the duties and services provided by dental assistants and dental hygienists without jeopardizing public safety. The proposed changes in the NDA/NDAA proposal offer improved access to care and maintain a high quality of care. I am in agreement with the technical review committee and the Board of Health that the Nebraska Dental Hygienists Association (NDHA) proposal would create too many risks for public health and safety if passed due to the inclusion of irreversible procedures pertinent to such things as tooth extraction and dental anesthesia for example. Therefore, I support the recommendations made by the technical review committee and the Board of Health.