

Senate Engrossed House Bill

~~dental board; formal hearings~~  
(now: dental board; hearings; hygienist supervision)

State of Arizona  
House of Representatives  
Fifty-seventh Legislature  
First Regular Session  
2025

# HOUSE BILL 2026

AN ACT

AMENDING SECTIONS 32-1263.02 AND 32-1281, ARIZONA REVISED STATUTES;  
RELATING TO THE STATE BOARD OF DENTAL EXAMINERS.

(TEXT OF BILL BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE)

1 Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Arizona:  
2       Section 1. Section 32-1263.02, Arizona Revised Statutes, is amended  
3 to read:

32-1263.02. Investigation and adjudication of complaints; disciplinary action; civil penalty; immunity; subpoena authority; definitions

7       A. The board on its own motion, or the investigation committee if  
8 established by the board, may investigate any evidence that appears to  
9 show the existence of any of the causes or grounds for disciplinary action  
10 as provided in section 32-1263. The board or investigation committee may  
11 investigate any complaint that alleges the existence of any of the causes  
12 or grounds for disciplinary action as provided in section 32-1263. The  
13 board shall not act on its own motion or on a complaint received by the  
14 board if the allegation of unprofessional conduct, unethical conduct or  
15 any other violation of this chapter against a licensee occurred more than  
16 four years before the complaint is received by the board. The four-year  
17 time limitation does not apply to:

18       1. Medical malpractice settlements or judgments, allegations of  
19 sexual misconduct or an incident or occurrence that involved a felony,  
20 diversion of a controlled substance or impairment while practicing by the  
21 licensee.

22       2. The board's consideration of the specific unprofessional conduct  
23 related to the licensee's failure to disclose conduct or a violation as  
24 required by law.

25 B. At the request of the complainant, the board or investigation  
26 committee shall not disclose to the respondent the ~~complainant~~  
27 COMPLAINANT'S name unless the information is essential to proceedings  
28 conducted pursuant to this article.

29 C. The board or investigation committee shall conduct necessary  
30 investigations, including interviews between THE INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE  
31 OR representatives of the board ~~or investigation committee~~ and the  
32 licensee with respect to any information obtained by or filed with the  
33 board under subsection A of this section or obtained by the board or  
34 investigation committee during the course of an investigation. The  
35 results of the investigation conducted by the investigation committee,  
36 including any recommendations from the investigation committee for  
37 disciplinary action against any licensee, shall be forwarded to the board  
38 for its review.

39 D. The board or investigation committee may designate one or more  
40 persons of appropriate competence to assist the board or investigation  
41 committee with any aspect of an investigation.

42 E. If, based on the information the board receives under subsection  
43 A or C of this section, the board finds that the public health, safety or  
44 welfare imperatively requires emergency action and incorporates a finding  
45 to that effect in its order, the board may order a summary suspension of a

1 licensee's license pursuant to section 41-1092.11 pending proceedings for  
2 revocation or other action.

3 F. If a complaint refers to quality of care, the patient may be  
4 referred for a clinical evaluation at the discretion of the board or the  
5 investigation committee.

6 G. If, after completing its investigation or review pursuant to  
7 this section, the board finds that the information provided pursuant to  
8 subsection A or C of this section is insufficient to merit disciplinary  
9 action against a licensee, the board may take any of the following  
10 actions:

11 1. Dismiss the complaint.

12 2. Issue a nondisciplinary letter of concern to the licensee.

13 3. Issue a nondisciplinary order requiring the licensee to complete  
14 a prescribed number of hours of continuing education in an area or areas  
15 prescribed by the board to provide the licensee with the necessary  
16 understanding of current developments, skills, procedures or treatment.

17 4. Assess a nondisciplinary civil penalty in an amount not to  
18 exceed \$500 if the complaint involves the licensee's failure to respond to  
19 a board subpoena.

20 H. If, after completing its investigation or review pursuant to  
21 this section, the board finds that the information provided pursuant to  
22 subsection A or C of this section is sufficient to merit disciplinary  
23 action against a licensee, the board may request that the licensee  
24 participate in a formal interview before the board. If the licensee  
25 refuses or accepts the invitation for a formal interview and the results  
26 indicate that grounds may exist for revocation or suspension, the board  
27 shall issue a formal complaint and order that a **FORMAL** hearing be held  
28 pursuant to title 41, chapter 6, article 10. If, after completing a  
29 formal interview, the board finds that the protection of the public  
30 requires emergency action, it may order a summary suspension of the  
31 license pursuant to section 41-1092.11 pending formal revocation  
32 proceedings or other action authorized by this section.

33 **I. IF, AFTER COMPLETING ITS INVESTIGATION OR REVIEW PURSUANT TO  
34 THIS SECTION, THE BOARD FINDS THAT THE INFORMATION PROVIDED PURSUANT TO  
35 SUBSECTION A OR C OF THIS SECTION IS SUFFICIENT TO MERIT REVOCATION OR  
36 SUSPENSION OF THE LICENSE, THE BOARD MAY ISSUE A FORMAL COMPLAINT AND  
37 ORDER THAT A FORMAL HEARING BE HELD PURSUANT TO TITLE 41, CHAPTER 6,  
38 ARTICLE 10.**

39 ~~I.~~ J. If, after completing a formal interview **OR FORMAL HEARING**,  
40 the board finds that the information provided under subsection A or C of  
41 this section is insufficient to merit suspension or revocation of the  
42 license, it may take any of the following actions:

43 1. Dismiss the complaint.

44 2. Order disciplinary action pursuant to section 32-1263.01,  
45 subsection A.

1       3. Enter into a consent agreement with the licensee for  
2 disciplinary action.

3       4. Order nondisciplinary continuing education pursuant to section  
4 32-1263.01, subsection B.

5       5. Issue a nondisciplinary letter of concern to the licensee.

6       **6. K.** A copy of the board's order issued pursuant to this section  
7 shall be given to the complainant and to the licensee. Pursuant to title  
8 41, chapter 6, article 10, the licensee may petition for rehearing or  
9 review.

10      **7. L.** Any person who in good faith makes a report or complaint as  
11 provided in this section to the board or to any person or committee acting  
12 on behalf of the board is not subject to liability for civil damages as a  
13 result of the report.

14      **8. M.** The board, through its president or the president's  
15 designee, may issue subpoenas to compel the attendance of witnesses and  
16 the production of documents and may administer oaths, take testimony and  
17 receive exhibits in evidence in connection with an investigation initiated  
18 by the board or a complaint filed with the board. In case of disobedience  
19 to a subpoena, the board may invoke the aid of any court of this state in  
20 requiring the attendance and testimony of witnesses and the production of  
21 documentary evidence.

22      **9. N.** Patient records, including clinical records, medical  
23 reports, laboratory statements and reports, files, films, reports or oral  
24 statements relating to diagnostic findings or treatment of patients, any  
25 information from which a patient or a patient's family may be identified  
26 or information received and records kept by the board as a result of the  
27 investigation procedures taken pursuant to this chapter, are not available  
28 to the public.

29      **10. O.** The board may charge the costs of formal hearings conducted  
30 pursuant to title 41, chapter 6, article 10 to a licensee it finds to be  
31 in violation of this chapter.

32      **11. P.** The board may accept the surrender of an active license from  
33 a licensee who is subject to a board investigation and who admits in  
34 writing to any of the following:

- 35       1. Being unable to safely engage in the practice of dentistry.
- 36       2. Having committed an act of unprofessional conduct.
- 37       3. Having violated this chapter or a board rule.

38      **12. Q.** In determining the appropriate disciplinary action under  
39 this section, the board may consider any previous nondisciplinary and  
40 disciplinary actions against a licensee.

41      **13. R.** If a licensee who is currently providing dental services for  
42 a registered business entity believes that the registered business entity  
43 has engaged in unethical conduct as defined pursuant to section 32-1263,  
44 subsection D, paragraph 16, the licensee must do both of the following  
45 before filing a complaint with the board:

1        1. Notify the registered business entity in writing that the  
2 licensee believes that the registered business entity has engaged in a  
3 policy or practice that interferes with the clinical judgment of the  
4 licensee or that compromises the licensee's ability to comply with the  
5 requirements of this chapter. The licensee shall specify in the notice  
6 the reasons for this belief.

7        2. Provide the registered business entity with at least ten  
8 calendar days to respond in writing to the assertions made pursuant to  
9 paragraph 1 of this subsection.

10        ~~R.~~ S. A licensee who files a complaint pursuant to subsection ~~Q~~ R  
11 of this section shall provide the board with a copy of the licensee's  
12 notification and the registered business entity's response, if any.

13        ~~S.~~ T. A registered business entity may not take any adverse  
14 employment action against a licensee because the licensee complies with  
15 the requirements of subsection ~~Q~~ R of this section.

16        ~~T.~~ U. For the purposes of this section:

17        1. "License" includes a certificate issued pursuant to this  
18 chapter.

19        2. "Licensee" means a dentist, dental therapist, dental hygienist,  
20 denturist, dental consultant, restricted permit holder or business entity  
21 regulated pursuant to this chapter.

22        Sec. 2. Section 32-1281, Arizona Revised Statutes, is amended to  
23 read:

24        32-1281. **Practicing as dental hygienist; supervision**  
25        requirements; definitions

26        A. A person is deemed to be practicing as a dental hygienist if the  
27 person does any of the acts or performs any of the operations included in  
28 the general practice of dental hygienists, dental hygiene and all related  
29 and associated duties.

30        B. A licensed dental hygienist may perform the following:

31        1. Prophylaxis.

32        2. Scaling.

33        3. Closed subgingival curettage.

34        4. Root planing.

35        5. Administering local anesthetics and nitrous oxide.

36        6. Inspecting the oral cavity and surrounding structures for the  
37 purposes of gathering clinical data to facilitate a diagnosis.

38        7. Periodontal screening or assessment.

39        8. Recording clinical findings.

40        9. Compiling case histories.

41        10. Exposing and processing dental radiographs.

42        11. Dental hygiene assessment and dental hygiene treatment planning  
43 as components of a diagnosis and treatment plan developed by a dentist.

44        12. All functions authorized and deemed appropriate for dental  
45 assistants.

1       13. Except as provided in paragraph 14 of this subsection, those  
2 restorative functions permissible for an expanded function dental  
3 assistant if qualified pursuant to section 32-1291.01.

4       14. Placing interim therapeutic restorations after successfully  
5 completing a course at an institution accredited by the commission on  
6 dental accreditation of the American dental association.

7       C. The board by rule shall prescribe the circumstances under which  
8 a licensed dental hygienist may:

9       1. Apply preventive and therapeutic agents to the hard and soft  
10 tissues.

11       2. Use emerging scientific technology and prescribe the necessary  
12 training, experience and supervision to operate newly developed scientific  
13 technology. A dentist who supervises a dental hygienist whose duties  
14 include the use of emerging scientific technology must have training on  
15 using the emerging technology that is equal to or greater than the  
16 training the dental hygienist is required to obtain.

17       3. Perform other procedures not specifically authorized by this  
18 section.

19       D. Except as provided in subsections E, F and I of this section, a  
20 dental hygienist shall practice under the general supervision of a dentist  
21 who is licensed pursuant to this chapter.

22       E. A dental hygienist may practice under the general supervision of  
23 a physician who is licensed pursuant to chapter 13 or 17 of this title in  
24 an inpatient hospital setting.

25       F. A dental hygienist may perform the following procedures on  
26 meeting the following criteria and under the following conditions:

27       1. Administering local anesthetics under the direct supervision of  
28 a dentist who is licensed pursuant to this chapter after:

29           (a) The dental hygienist successfully completes a course in  
30 administering local anesthetics that includes didactic and clinical  
31 components in both block and infiltration techniques offered by a dental  
32 or dental hygiene program accredited by the commission on dental  
33 accreditation of the American dental association.

34           (b) The dental hygienist successfully completes an examination in  
35 local anesthesia given by ~~the western regional examining board or a~~  
~~written and clinical examination of another~~ A state or regional  
~~examination that is substantially equivalent to the requirements of this~~  
~~state, as determined by the board~~ TESTING AGENCY IN THE UNITED STATES.

36           (c) The board issues to the dental hygienist a local anesthesia  
37 certificate on receipt of proof that the requirements of subdivisions (a)  
38 and (b) of this paragraph have been met.

39       2. Administering local anesthetics under general supervision to a  
40 patient of record if all of the following are true:

41           (a) The dental hygienist holds a local anesthesia certificate  
42 issued by the board.

- 1        (b) The patient is at least eighteen years of age.
- 2        (c) The patient has been examined by a dentist who is licensed
- 3 pursuant to this chapter within the previous twelve months.

4 (d) There has been no change in the patient's medical history since  
5 the last examination. If there has been a change in the patient's medical  
6 history within that time, the dental hygienist must consult with the  
7 dentist before administering local anesthetics.

8 (e) The supervising dentist who performed the examination has  
9 approved the patient for being administered local anesthetics by the  
10 dental hygienist under general supervision and has documented this  
11 approval in the patient's record.

12       3. Administering nitrous oxide analgesia under the direct  
13 supervision of a dentist who is licensed pursuant to this chapter after:

14 (a) The dental hygienist successfully completes a course in  
15 administering nitrous oxide analgesia that includes didactic and clinical  
16 components offered by a dental or dental hygiene program accredited by the  
17 commission on dental accreditation of the American dental association.

18 (b) The board issues to the dental hygienist a nitrous oxide  
19 analgesia certificate on receipt of proof that the requirements of  
20 subdivision (a) of this paragraph have been met.

21       G. The board may issue local anesthesia and nitrous oxide analgesia  
22 certificates to a licensed dental hygienist on receipt of evidence  
23 satisfactory to the board that the dental hygienist holds a valid  
24 certificate or credential in good standing in the respective procedure  
25 issued by a licensing board of another jurisdiction of the United States.

26 H. A dental hygienist may perform dental hygiene procedures in the  
27 following settings:

28       1. On a patient of record of a dentist within that dentist's  
29 office.  
30       2. Except as prescribed in section 32-1289.01, in a health care  
31 facility, long-term care facility, public health agency or institution,  
32 public or private school or homebound setting on patients who have been  
33 examined by a dentist within the previous year.

34       3. In an inpatient hospital setting pursuant to subsection E of  
35 this section.

36 I. A dental hygienist may provide dental hygiene services under an  
37 affiliated practice relationship with a dentist as prescribed in section  
38 32-1289.01

39 1. For the purposes of this article:

39        6. For the purposes of this article:

40        1. "Assessment" means a limited, clinical inspection that is  
41 performed to identify possible signs of oral or systemic disease,  
42 malformation or injury and the potential need for referral for diagnosis  
43 and treatment, and may include collecting clinical information to  
44 facilitate an examination, diagnosis and treatment plan by a dentist.

1        2. "Dental hygiene assessment" means ~~identifying~~ THE IDENTIFICATION  
2 ~~OF~~ an existing or potential oral health problem that dental hygienists are  
3 educationally qualified and licensed to treat.

4        3. "Dental hygiene treatment planning" means performing a  
5 prioritized sequence of dental hygiene interventions that is predicated on  
6 the dental hygiene assessment and that is limited to those services  
7 included in the scope of practice for dental hygienists.

8        4. "Direct supervision" means that the dentist is present in the  
9 office while the dental hygienist is treating a patient and is available  
10 for consultation regarding procedures that the dentist authorizes and for  
11 which the dentist is responsible.

12        5. "General supervision" means:

13            (a) That the dentist is available for consultation, whether or not  
14 the dentist is in the dentist's office, over procedures that the dentist  
15 has authorized and for which the dentist remains responsible.

16            (b) With respect to an inpatient hospital setting, that a physician  
17 who is licensed pursuant to chapter 13 or 17 of this title is available  
18 for consultation, whether or not the physician is physically present at  
19 the hospital.

20        6. "Interim therapeutic restoration" means a provisional  
21 restoration that is placed to stabilize a primary or permanent tooth and  
22 that consists of removing soft material from the tooth using only hand  
23 instrumentation, without using rotary instrumentation, and subsequently  
24 placing an adhesive restorative material.

25        7. "Screening" means determining an individual's need to be seen by  
26 a dentist for diagnosis and does not include an examination, diagnosis or  
27 treatment planning.