

AzDHA Advocacy Committee

Report to General Assembly 2021

AzDHA Advocacy Committee Chair:

Deb Kappes, dkappes.azdha@gmail.com

Committee Members/Consultants:

Karen Christen, Michelle Gross-Panico, Tricia Moore, Emma Violante

Legislative Representation:

Compass Strategies (Jessie Armendt & Kelsey Lundy)

Primary Objective:

To initiate and influence legislation and regulatory activities relating to the public's health and the dental hygiene profession.

2021 Legislative Priorities

Summary provided by Jessie Armendt, Compass Strategies

HB 2547: dental hygienists; affiliated practice – Wilmeth

SIGNED

AzDHA reintroduced its legislation from last year which sought to make numerous changes to dental hygiene statutes. The mirror bills introduced by Representative Justin Wilmeth and Senator Nancy Barto specify that an affiliated practice agreement between a dental hygienist and a dentist is required to include the conditions under which the affiliated practice dental hygienist may administer local anesthesia and provide root planning and to include the circumstances under which the affiliated practice dental hygienist must consult with the affiliated practice dentist before initiating further treatment on patients who have not been seen by a dentist within 12 months after the initial treatment by the dental hygienist. Additionally, the maximum number of affiliated practice dental hygienists that may provide services under each dentist in an affiliated practice relationship at any one time was deleted from statute. Barto's bill, SB 1140, passed easily out of the Senate with a unanimous vote. Wilmeth's bill encountered trouble in the House, however, when Representative Regina Cobb vehemently protested the deletion of the limit on affiliated practice dental hygienists practicing at one time. HB 2547 was amended to reinsert the limit and then passed out of the House unanimously. Upon its arrival in the Senate, AzDHA asked Barto to further amend HB 2547 to increase the limit from three to six after securing the agreement of AzDA. The amended bill passed the Senate unanimously and was returned to the House for final read, where it also passed unanimously. HB 2547 was signed into law on April 9th and will take effect on September 29, 2021.

SB 1504: dentists; dental hygienists; vaccines – Shope

FAILED TO PASS

AzDHA supported AzDA's legislation allowing dental professionals to administer influenza and COVID-19 vaccines to patients who are at least 18 years of age. However, Senate Health and Human Services Chair Nancy Barto objected to the expansion of vaccine availability and declined to hear the bill in committee. AzDHA and AzDA worked together to secure a vehicle bill and prepared to strike the language in House Appropriations. However, Barto's anger with the sponsor of the vehicle bill ultimately halted the plan and dental professional vaccine authority will have to be revisited in another session.

HB 2291: AHCCCS; pregnant women; dental care – Osborne

FAILED

For the fourth year in a row, AzDHA joined a coalition of stakeholders seeking to obtain a comprehensive dental benefit for pregnant women on AHCCCS. Unfortunately, AHCCCS continues to revise up its fiscal estimate for the bill, claiming that the dental benefit could lead to a substantial shift in costs if more AHCCCS members move to the SOBRA category, which has a lower federal match rate. The sponsor, House Health and Human Services Chair Joanne Osborne, decided not to move the bill forward after seeing the updated AHCCCS fiscal estimates.

Activities:

- 2021 Capitol Day Event – Virtual event held on Tuesday, March 2nd. Thirty-nine people attended. Agenda included an overview of the 2021 legislative session as well as virtual visits by Senator Nancy Barto and Representative Amish Shah. Plans for 2022 are pending.
- Board of Dental Examiners (BODEX)
 - Ongoing participation in rules process for dental therapy – Deb Kappes was appointed by BODEX to the Rules Advisory Team in May. Next meeting is scheduled for October 29th. Meeting are virtual and open to the public. See BODEX website for meeting information and past audio recordings.
 - Vicki Penna, RDH was appointed by Governor Ducey as the new dental hygienist board member (replacing Heather Hardy). She is Associate Clinical Professor at NAU and her appointment was supported by AzDHA.
 - The other dental hygienist BODEX member is Marilyn J. McClain. Her term expires: 01/01/2022 and is not eligible for reappointment. AzDHA is seeking candidates to support. Contact Deb Kappes for more information.
- Presentations – “Dental Hygienists and The Law” presented at AzDHA’s 2021 Virtual Impact Conference on January 23, 2021.
- Teamed with Laurie Clark and Michelle Gross-Panico to launch the Affiliated Practice Community of Practice. First meeting was held virtually on May 20th and will continue to meet every other month.
- Coalition Participation
 - Arizona Oral Health Coalition’s Advocacy Work Group
 - AzDHA Advocacy is seeking a volunteer to liaison with The AZ Partnership for Immunizations (TAPI) Work Group re: HPV vaccination – work is focused on provider and health professional student education. Contact Deb Kappes for more information.
- The Committee continues to work toward established priorities that align with the AzDHA Strategic Plan.