

20 December 2011

Dear practitioner,

**Consultation outcomes on the proposed changes to the dental hygiene scope of practice - relating to orthodontic procedures and the orthodontic auxiliary scope of practice prescribed qualifications**

The Council has been consulting with stakeholders since May 2011, through the three consultation documents issued, on the proposed changes to the dental hygiene scope of practice, specifically in relation to the orthodontic procedures contained in this scope, and the orthodontic auxiliary scope of practice prescribed qualifications.

The responses to the two consultations issued during September 2011 were considered by Council at its December 2011 meeting. Council approved the proposed changes as reflected in the consultation documents, with the detail of these approved changes explained below.

**Changes to the dental hygiene scope of practice**

In May 2011 a consultation document was issued proposing to align the activities relating to orthodontic procedures of the dental hygiene scope of practice with those procedures contained in the orthodontic auxiliary scope of practice. In addition, it was proposed that these orthodontic procedures be performed under *direct clinical supervision*. A draft working relationship between dental hygienists, dentists and dental specialists was included reflecting the corresponding changes.

The proposals were supported by the majority of respondents and were approved by Council at its August 2011 meeting. However, a few submissions identified some areas that required further consideration and Council issued a follow-up consultation document on 9 September 2011.

The follow-up consultation proposed to clarify the different supervision levels for the procedures contained in the dental hygiene scope of practice by grouping these into the relevant categories of supervision levels, that is, clinical guidance and direct clinical supervision. In addition, the document included a proposal to appropriately align the supervision levels of the orthodontic procedures already reflected in the “general” hygiene scope of practice, and to remove any duplication of procedures.

As indicated earlier, these proposals were supported by the submissions received, and approved by Council at its December 2011 meeting.

A copy of the Gazette Notice, to be published on 22 December 2011, containing the revised dental hygiene scope of practice is attached to this letter (*Appendix 1*). The original consultation documents that contain the specific details on all of these proposals can be found on the Council’s website at <http://www.dcnz.org.nz/dcConsultation>.

The working relationship between dental hygienists, dentists and dental specialists will now be updated to reflect the recently approved scope of practice changes. The revised working relationship will be considered by Council at its first meeting in

2012, and practitioners will be provided with a copy of the final document, once approved.

### **Changes to the orthodontic auxiliary scope of practice prescribed qualifications**

The May 2011 consultation indicated that if the proposal to align the orthodontic procedures undertaken by dental hygienists and orthodontic auxiliary be accepted, then in the future dental hygienists, trained by institutions whose accredited programmes include (or included) these orthodontic procedures in their training, will be competent to perform all those activities now reflected in the scope of practice for dental hygiene.

This resulted in the proposal that the prescribed qualifications of orthodontic auxiliaries be amended to reflect this change by including the three accredited dental hygiene programmes that include (or included) training in these orthodontic procedures.

This proposal was approved by Council and the following three programmes were added as prescribed qualifications for the orthodontic auxiliary scope of practice<sup>1</sup>:

- Bachelor of Health Science (Endorsement in Dental Hygiene), University of Otago, conferred from 2002 and registration in the Scope of Dental Hygiene Practice; or
- Bachelor of Oral Health, University of Otago and registration in the Scope of Dental Hygiene Practice; or
- Diploma in Dental Hygiene, University of Otago conferred from 2002 and registration in the Scope of Dental Hygiene Practice.

In addition, the September consultation document reported that Council agreed with the view of the accreditation review team, that both current prescribed qualifications for orthodontic auxiliaries meet the educational requirements to cover the activities of *taking intra-oral and extra-oral radiographs*.

Council therefore proposed that the requirement for the completion of a *Dental Council approved course for intra-oral and extra-oral radiographs* be removed from the current two prescribed qualifications, that is, *Graduate Certificate of Orthodontic Assisting, Academy of Orthodontic Assisting* and *New Zealand Association of Orthodontists, Orthodontic Auxiliary Training Programme: Certificate of Orthodontic Assisting*.

It was further proposed to standardise the qualification format by rephrasing the New Zealand Association of Orthodontists (NZAO) qualification from *New Zealand Association of Orthodontists, Orthodontic Auxiliary Training Programme: Certificate of Orthodontic Assisting* to *Certificate of Orthodontic Assisting, New Zealand Association of Orthodontists: Orthodontic Auxiliary Training Programme*.

All these proposals were supported by the submissions received, and approved by Council at its December 2011 Council meeting.

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<sup>1</sup> AUT introduced orthodontic procedures in its BHSc (Oral Health) programme for 2011 graduates – the successful implementation of this will be reviewed by Council at its March 2012 meeting during the consideration of the annual report submitted from AUT.

What does this mean for practitioners?

- Those dental hygienists that obtained one of the three dental hygiene programmes, listed earlier, now approved and published as orthodontic auxiliary prescribed qualifications, will be able to apply for registration as an orthodontic auxiliary without any further training requirements.

Please note that this does not waive the normal registration requirements to be met as required by the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 and Council's registration related policies.

- The qualification name of the *New Zealand Association of Orthodontists, Orthodontic Auxiliary Training Programme: Certificate of Orthodontic Assisting* will now be reflected as *Certificate of Orthodontic Assisting, New Zealand Association of Orthodontists: Orthodontic Auxiliary Training Programme*.
- Orthodontic auxiliaries who in future obtain the *Graduate Certificate of Orthodontic Assisting, Academy of Orthodontic* and *Certificate of Orthodontic Assisting, New Zealand Association of Orthodontists: Orthodontic Auxiliary Training Programme* qualifications will not have to complete a Dental Council approved course for "intra-oral and extra-oral radiographs" to be able to perform these procedures.
- Registrants with the *New Zealand Association of Orthodontists, Orthodontic Auxiliary Training Programme: Certificate of Orthodontic Assisting* and *New Zealand Association of Orthodontists, Orthodontic Auxiliary Training Programme: Certificate of Orthodontic Assisting* qualifications, who have existing exclusions for intra-oral and extra-oral radiographs on their scope of practice, will have these exclusions removed and new registration certificates issued. All annual practising certificates issued at the next recertification cycle, during March 2012, will be issued with the amended scope of practice details.

A copy of the Gazette Notice, to be published on 22 December 2011, containing the revised prescribed qualifications for the orthodontic auxiliary scope of practice is attached to this letter (*Appendix 2*). The original consultation documents that contain the specific details on all of these proposals can be found on the Council's website at <http://www.dcnz.org.nz/dcConsultation>.

I would like to thank all stakeholders that responded to the various consultations for your time and effort as your contributions inform and strengthen the outcomes.

Yours sincerely



Marie Warner  
Chief Executive

## Notice of Replacement of Scope of Practice

Pursuant to section 11 of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003, this notice is issued by the Dental Council.

**The following replaces the scope of practice for the “Scope of Dental Hygiene Practice” in the notice published in the *New Zealand Gazette*, 17 March 2011, No. 32, page 872.**

### ***Dental Hygiene***

#### ***Scope of Dental Hygiene Practice***

The scope of practice for dental hygiene is set out in the documented “Detailed Scope of Practice for Dental Hygiene Practice” produced and published from time to time by the Dental Council.

Dental hygiene practice is a subset of the practice of dentistry, and is commensurate with a dental hygienist’s approved education, training and competence.

A dental hygienist’s major role is in the provision of oral health education and the prevention of oral disease to promote healthy oral behaviours. A dental hygienist’s primary task is in prevention and non-surgical treatment of periodontal diseases. A dental hygienist guides patients’ personal care to maintain sound oral tissues as an integral part of their general health.

Dental hygienists practise in a team situation with clinical guidance provided by a practising dentist or dental specialist<sup>1</sup>, though some aspects of the scope of practice are provided under direct clinical supervision<sup>2</sup>.

#### **Detailed Scope of Practice for Dental Hygiene Practice**

The Dental Council defines the practice of dentistry as the maintenance of health through the assessment, diagnosis, management, treatment and prevention of any disease, disorder or condition of the orofacial complex and associated structures.

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<sup>1</sup> **Clinical guidance** means the professional support and assistance provided to a dental hygienist by a practising dentist or dental specialist as part of the provision of overall integrated care to the patient group. Dental hygienists and dentists or dental specialists normally work from the same premises providing a team approach. Clinical guidance may be provided at a distance but appropriate access must be available to ensure that the dentist or dental specialist is able to provide guidance and advice, when required, and maintain general oversight of the clinical care outcomes of the patient group. Dental hygienists are responsible and accountable for their own clinical practice within their scope of practice but the dentist or dental specialist is responsible and accountable for the clinical guidance provided. Further detail on the working relationship between dental hygienists and dentists will be set out in the relevant Dental Council Code of Practice.

<sup>2</sup> **Direct clinical supervision** means the clinical supervision provided to a dental hygienist by a practising dentist or dental specialist when the dentist is present on the premises at the time the dental hygiene work is carried out.

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A dental hygienist's major role is in the provision of oral health education and the prevention of oral disease to promote healthy oral behaviours. A dental hygienist's primary task is in prevention and non-surgical treatment of periodontal diseases. A dental hygienist guides patients' personal care to maintain sound oral tissues as an integral part of their general health. Dental hygienists practise in a team situation with clinical guidance provided by a practising dentist or dental specialist, though some aspects of the scope of practice are provided under direct clinical supervision.

Dental hygiene practice includes teaching, research and management given that such roles influence clinical practice and public safety.

Dental hygiene practice involves the following aspects -

***Provided under clinical guidance:***

- Obtaining and reassessing medical and dental health histories.
- Examination of oral tissues and recognition of abnormalities.
- Assessing and provisionally diagnosing disease of periodontal tissues, and appropriate referral.
- Obtaining informed consent for dental hygiene care plans.
- Providing oral health education, information, promotion and counselling.
- Scaling, debridement and prophylaxis of supra and subgingival tooth surfaces.
- Applying and dispensing non-prescription preventive agents and fissure sealants.
- Applying and dispensing topical agents for the treatment of tooth surface sensitivity and tooth discolouration.
- Administering topical local anaesthetic.
- Taking impressions, recording occlusal relationships and making study models.
- Taking impressions, constructing and fitting mouthguards and bleaching trays.
- Taking intra and extra-oral photographs.
- Performing postoperative procedures such as removal of sutures and placement and removal of periodontal dressings.
- Recontouring and polishing of restorations.
- Taking periapical and bitewing radiographs for the purpose of recognising disease of the periodontium<sup>3</sup>.
- Taking extra-oral radiographs.
- Assisting the dentist or dental specialist in implementing orthodontic treatment plans, prepared by the dentist or dental specialist responsible for the patient's clinical care outcomes, through performing the following orthodontic procedures:
  - Tracing cephalometric radiographs.
  - Supragingival polishing of teeth (as part of oral hygiene, before bonding and after removal of fixed attachments).
  - Providing oral hygiene instruction and advice on the care and maintenance of orthodontic appliances.

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<sup>3</sup> Section 15 of the Radiation Protection Act 1965 requires non-licensed persons who take x-rays to do so under the supervision or instructions of a person who holds a licence under that Act.

- Making study models, and fabricating retainers, and undertaking other simple laboratory procedures of an orthodontic nature.

***Provided under the direct clinical supervision of a dentist or dental specialist:***

- Applying prescription preventive agents.
- Administering local anaesthetic using dentoalveolar infiltration and inferior dental nerve block techniques.
- Assisting the dentist or dental specialist in implementing orthodontic treatment plans, prepared by the dentist or dental specialist responsible for the patient's clinical care outcomes, through performing the following orthodontic procedures:
  - Placing separators.
  - Sizing of metal bands and their cementation including loose bands during treatment.
  - Preparation of teeth for the bonding of fixed attachments and fixed retainers.
  - Indirect bonding of brackets as set up by the dentist or dental specialist.
  - Placing archwires as formed by the dentist or dental specialist when necessary and replacing ligatures /closing self ligating brackets.
  - Removing archwires after removing elastomeric or wire ligatures, or opening self ligating brackets.
  - Removing fixed orthodontic attachments and retainers.
  - Removing adhesives after the removal of fixed attachments using burs in slow speed handpieces where there is minimal potential for the removal of enamel.
  - Trial fitting of removable appliances. This does not include activation.
  - Fitting of passive removable retainers.
  - Bonding preformed fixed retainers.

## **Notice of Replacement Prescribed Qualifications for Scope of Practice**

Pursuant to section 12 of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003, this notice is issued by the Dental Council.

**The following replaces the prescribed qualifications for the “Scope of Orthodontic Auxiliary Practice” in the notice published in the New Zealand Gazette, 4 March 2010, No. 25, page 592.**

### **Scope of Orthodontic Auxiliary Practice**

#### **Prescribed Qualifications**

- Certificate of Orthodontic Assisting, Academy of Orthodontic Assisting; possession of a dental therapy, dental hygiene or dentistry qualification and approved experience in the provision of orthodontic auxiliary services under the direction and supervision of a dentist or dental specialist who can attest to competency<sup>1</sup>.
- Certificate of Orthodontic Assisting, New Zealand Association of Orthodontists: Orthodontic Auxiliary Training Programme<sup>2</sup>.
- Bachelor of Health Science (Endorsement in Dental Hygiene), University of Otago, conferred from 2002 and registration in the Scope of Dental Hygiene Practice.
- Bachelor of Oral Health, University of Otago and registration in the Scope of Dental Hygiene Practice.
- Diploma in Dental Hygiene, University of Otago conferred from 2002 and registration in the Scope of Dental Hygiene Practice.

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<sup>1</sup> The Dental Council approved this prescribed qualification on 10 July 2006.

<sup>2</sup> The Dental Council approved this prescribed qualification on 15 February 2010.