**The Ohio Dental Hygienists' Association opposes the so-called "Dental Access Model Act." This concerning legislation, should it be introduced in our state, would call into question Ohio's public safety standards, quality of care, and professional standards of dental hygiene.**

While a few other states have proposed allowing Dental Assistants or Expanded Function Dental Auxiliaries (EFDAs) the ability to perform critical procedures like scaling, Ohio remains a leader in patient safety.

Scaling is a preventative and therapeutic treatment requiring the specialized education and clinical training of Registered Dental Hygienists. Scaling utilizes surgically sharp instruments, and allowing individuals with significantly less training to scale puts patients at risk.

## Registered Dental Hygienists

Dental Hygienists are trained to provide a broad spectrum of preventive and therapeutic oral health services that extend far beyond scaling, including preliminary clinical exams of teeth and oral tissues, polishing of the teeth, the identification and treatment of gingivitis and periodontal disease, take x-rays, sealant placement, fluoride application, medical history evaluation, oral health education, and other applicable services.

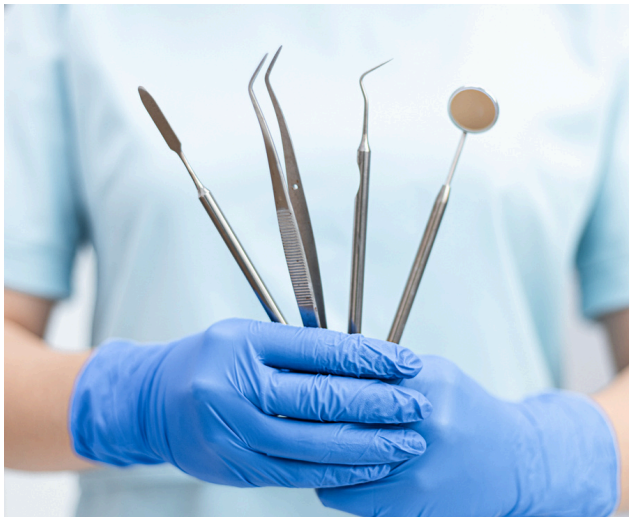
Ohio's Hygienists may also administer local anesthesia and nitrous oxide analgesia under the direct supervision of the dentist.

## Dental Assistants / EFDAs

Dental Assistants and EFDAs assist the dentist, help patients feel comfortable, take patents' blood pressure, take x-rays, help maintain a clean work environment including sterilizing equipment, and provide follow up care instructions for patients.

Dental Hygienists are the only degreed professionals (other than dentists) in the dental office. To obtain a license in Ohio, Hygienists must complete a dental hygiene program that is accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation, pass a written National Dental Hygiene Board exam, pass a clinical exam, and pass a jurisprudence test on Ohio's laws and regulations. Ohio Dental Hygiene education averages 3,016 hours including the supervised instruction of 755 hours in pre-clinic and clinical courses, graduating with an associate or bachelor's degree.

The Ohio State Dental Board does not license Dental Assistants. Instead, Dental Assistants can receive on-the-job training in a dental office through a high school or post-high school work study program, and they can be certified through either the Dental Assisting National Board, the Ohio Commission on Dental Assistant Certification, or the American Medical Technologists (though certification is not required). With additional training, they can become EFDA, allowing them to provide restorative services.



While Dental Assistants and EFDAs are important parts of the dental team and these are needed functions, allowing individuals without proper education and necessary clinical training to only scale above the gumline puts all Ohioans at risk, especially diabetics, heart patients, and cancer patients.

**While a few states have enacted the so-called "Dental Access Model Act," Ohio must be steadfast in its commitment to protecting its citizens through the legislation, licensure, education, and enforcement of our laws and rules with fairness and integrity.**

**The Ohio Dental Hygienists' Association will continue to oppose any measure that does not prioritize patient safety, maintain high professional standards, and expand access to care equitably.**