

LEGISLATIVE



Telehealth for Dentistry

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The problem:

Dental hygienists working in non-traditional practice settings under general supervision assess the patient prior to beginning care. Their comprehensive training allows them to “see and identify” oral conditions that point the doctor to immediate and future dental needs the patient may have. In some states where the supervising dentist is not physically present during a patient assessment, findings may be sent remotely to the dentist for evaluation. This is known as Telehealth for Dentistry or Teledentistry which has been shown to bring about efficiency, provide access to underserved populations, and improve quality of care to reduce the oral disease burden. Teledentistry can take several forms, such as real-time two-way audio, visual telecommunication or electronic communications and facilities assessment. Diagnosis, consultation, treatment planning, and care management can be carried out by a professional through Teledentistry. Georgia has no laws to authorize a Georgia supervising dentist to send or receive remote communication even though the state has engaged with telemedicine for over 20 years.

What other states are doing:

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What this legislation would do:

The 2017 final report of Georgia’s Health Care Reform Task Force, declared “the state needs new models of health care delivery, which are more flexible, less capital-intensive, and take advantage of new technologies to deliver care in a timely and efficient manner.” The American Dental Association (ADA) resolution on teledentistry states that this model of delivery of care can provide easier access to dental care for nursing home residents or those who live in rural areas without a dentist.

Any opposition:

There are no statutes on teledentistry that GDHA is aware of.

Helpful Resources:

GDHA is in the process of speaking with various stakeholders that may be interested in supporting telehealth for dentistry legislation.