



Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Dennis R. Schrader, Acting Secretary

Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners
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**2021 SESSION
POSITION PAPER**

BILL NO: SB 808

COMMITTEE: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

POSITION: Support

TITLE: Health Occupations-Licensed Dentists-Administration of Vaccines

BILL ANALYSIS: The Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners supports Senate Bill (SB) 808 – Health Occupations-Licensed Dentists-Administration of Vaccines. The bill permits a dentist to administer an influenza vaccine to a patient of record who is at least 9 years old, in accordance with regulations adopted by the Board, in consultation with the Department of Health. The bill permits a dentist, with a prescription from an authorized provider, to administer a vaccination that is listed in the Centers for Disease and Control and Prevention’s (CDC) Recommended Immunization Schedule to a patient of records who is at least 11 years old but under the age of 18. In addition, a licensed dentist may administer to an adult patient of record, a vaccination that is listed in the CDC’s Recommended Immunization Schedule or recommended in the CDC’s Health Information for International Travel. The dentist must report all vaccinations to the State’s ImmuNet program established under § 18-109 of the Health General Article. Before dismissal of the patient, the dentist must provide the patient with an immunization card and a separate document providing detailed information identifying the vaccine, the dosage amount, possible side effects, instructions for countering possible side effects, and any allergies that the patient may have.

Before administering vaccines, dentists must first successfully complete a Board-approved certification course that includes instruction in the guidelines and recommendations of the CDC regarding vaccinations and receive acknowledgment of course completion from the Dental Board. Dentists must also maintain cardiopulmonary Resuscitation Certification (CPR) and if the vaccination has been ordered by another provider, make efforts to inform the provider of the vaccination. In order to remain eligible to administer vaccines, a dentist must successfully complete a Board-approved continuing education class of at least 2-hours every other license renewal cycle that addresses proper prescribing and disposal of prescription drugs, and adverse interactions and actions of vaccines.

The program to vaccinate is entirely voluntary. Dentists are not required to seek certification to administer vaccines, and if they do not participate in the program, they would not be permitted to

administer vaccines. In addition, in the event that a catastrophic health emergency is declared, the bill permits dentists with or without certification to administer vaccines that have been recognized by the CDC to be effective in combating the particular illness during the emergency. The bill requires the Board to promulgate regulations to implement the law. Finally, the bill amends the definition of “practice dentistry” to include the administration of the vaccines.

POSITION AND RATIONALE:

The Dental Board strongly supports the bill. First and foremost, by allowing dentists to administer vaccines, access to care is increased in the State in a reasonable manner. Dentists will be professionally trained, and vaccines administered in a clean and safe environment. Within the previous 20 years, as the practice of dentistry has expanded, dentists have administered more intraoral and extraoral intramuscular injections than any other health care provider. Many Marylanders see their dentists once or twice a year whereas it may be a number of years before a Marylander sees their physician, especially those who are younger. If a patient has a primary care provider, it is sometimes difficult to obtain an appointment without a prolonged wait. In addition, in the event of a declared health emergency, any licensed dentist would be permitted to administer vaccinations during the pending emergency that have been recognized by the CDC as effective in combating the illness. Parenthetically, dentists in Oregon, Illinois, Minnesota, and Arkansas are already administering vaccines and their programs are considered a success. The curriculum is taught at the University of Maryland Dental School.

At all times, a Maryland dentist’s operatory must comply with CDC and infection control guidelines including the wearing of proper PPE. Receiving a vaccine in a dentist’s operatory provides a far greater infection control environment than receiving one in a retail outlet. All dentists, even those who choose not to participate in the program, must complete a 2-hour Board-approved course in infection control as a condition of license renewal. Allowing dentists to administer vaccines will be a great benefit to the citizens of Maryland.

There are over 5,000 dentists in Maryland and their potential to administer vaccines has not yet been tapped. Geographically, dentists are widely distributed throughout the State, and are well suited to provide additional care, especially during the current pandemic and beyond. As time progresses, more COVID-19 vaccines that require basic refrigeration will receive FDA-approval and be available to individual health care providers such as dentists to administer.

For these reasons, the Board requests that SB 808 receive a favorable report.

I hope that this information is useful. If you would like to discuss this further, please contact Dr. James Goldsmith, Board President at 301-367-2352, jgoldsm217@comcast.net, or Dr. Arpana Verma, the Board’s Legislative Committee Chair at 240-498-8159, asverma93@gmail.com. In addition, the Board’s Executive Director, Mr. Frank McLaughlin, may be reached at 443-878-5253, frank.maclaughlin@maryland.gov.

The opinion of the Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners expressed in this support position paper does not necessarily reflect that of the Department of Health or the Administration.