

EXTENDED CARE PERMIT

SPONSORING DENTIST

The role of the sponsoring dentist is fundamental to the Extended Care Permit. This section of the toolkit contains the following:

- Overview: Role of the Sponsoring Dentist
- Questions and answers designed to clarify the sponsoring relationship
- Sponsoring dentist/hygienist agreement template
- Sample agreement

Role of the Sponsoring Dentist

A sponsoring dentist is essential to an Extended Care Permit Hygienist. It is a dental professional partnership, although different from the teamwork between supervising dentist and hygienist. A sponsoring dentist only monitors the ECP's report of treatment and findings and may provide guidance and information when appropriate. The law does not require the dentist to examine or treat people receiving ECP services in community or dental clinic settings.

Sponsorship begins with the Kansas Dental Hygiene Extended Care Permit I & II Application, available at the Kansas Dental Board website: http://www.accesskansas.org/kdb/Documents/Forms/ECP_IandIIrevised71408.pdf

The document formalizes the working relationship when the dentists complete the front section requiring their basic information and sign the form, verifying accuracy of the information included on the form. If a hygienist's sponsoring dentist cannot or will not continue to function as a sponsoring dentist, the hygienist shall cease providing extended care permit treatment until the hygienist obtains a written agreement with a replacement sponsoring dentist. (K.S.A. 71-3-9)

Hygienists may have more than one sponsoring dentist if they are providing services in different community sites or dental public health clinics, but the law only requires one sponsoring dentist. Additional dentists must sign a completed original form:

http://www.accesskansas.org/kdb/Documents/Forms/ECP_IandIIrevised71408.pdf.

If hygienists change sponsoring dentists, they must complete a different form, again available from the Kansas Dental Board's website:

<http://www.accesskansas.org/kdb/Documents/Forms/ECPchangeofsponsoringDentist.pdf>

A dentist may sponsor up to a total of five Extended Care Permit hygienists: These can be a combination of ECP I & II. (K.S.A. 65-1456 (f)(3)&(g)(3)).



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Sponsoring Dentist & ECP Hygienist Agreement

K.S.A. 65-1456(3)(f)&(g) requires that the dentist and hygienist develop an agreement in writing, outlining the ECP hygienist's specific responsibilities. This agreement is for the benefit of the hygienist and dentist; Kansas Dental Board does not request a copy for its files. In addition to the requirements described in the Extended Care Permit law, the dental hygienist and dentist will benefit by drafting an agreement that reflects the individual nature of the work, Extended Care Permit site, population to receive services and the community being served. Agreements may be in letter form or formal contracts. There is no standard format dictated by law.

Some practical elements of the sponsorship agreement should include these items: hygienist and dentist's names, contact information, degrees, licenses, and any other information essential to the ECP services. Since the law requires that the hygienist show proof of professional liability insurance, the signed agreement should include that information.(K.S.A. 65-1456 (f)(2)&(g)(2)). In order for the dentist to anticipate the type of reports that will be submitted, the agreement should include the hygiene services that will be performed and the information the dentist can expect. It is useful for the agreement to also include information about the community sites where Extended Care Permit services will be performed.

ECP Patient Assessment Reports of findings and treatment

The law specifies that the dentist is responsible for monitoring the hygienist's findings and treatment. (K.S.A. 65-1456 (f)(3)) The hygienist must send a written or electronic report to the sponsoring dentist within 30 days after providing ECP patient services. In addition, the hygienist is responsible to send the report to a dental or medical director when providing services in a community setting: for example, a school nurse, medical director of a long-term care facility, or dental director of a residential therapeutic treatment program.

A sponsoring dentist monitors the ECP's patient services through written or electronic report of treatment and findings and may provide guidance and information when appropriate. In addition, the sponsoring dentist may delegate duties to the hygienist verbally or in writing that are consistent with a hygienist's scope of practice outlined in the dental practice act. (K.S.A. 65-1456 (f)(4)(e)). If the sponsorship agreement includes the dentist collecting fees for the Extended Care Permit, the dentist pays the hygienist for ECP hygiene services performed. (K.S.A. 65-1456 (f)(7)).



Q&A

SPONSORING DENTIST

Q. How do I find a dentist to sponsor me for an Extended Care Permit?

A. A successful professional relationship has respect and trust at its foundation. These are the ingredients for all partnerships, teams, and professional/client relationships. You can begin by asking a dentist you have worked with. As an alternative, consider seeking out a dentist who demonstrates a commitment to public health dentistry: someone working at a public health clinic, volunteering in community projects, or serving patients covered by Medicaid/HealthWave. One hygienist approached a dentist she had met at several Kansas Mission of Mercy projects.

Q. What do I say to a dentist who might sponsor me for an ECP?

A. If you are just starting to explore the benefits of having a permit, you could simply ask dentists if they have considered sponsoring hygienists. You can prepare for the conversation by listing the basic requirement: you must submit reports to the dentist within 30 days after serving patients and the dentist is responsible for reviewing reports of treatment within thirty days after you submit them. These preliminary conversations help surface dentists' questions about ECP and their roles. Here's one way of introducing the topic:

I have begun looking into an Extended Care Permit but I am just at the stage of exploring how it might fit into my professional practice. I have a lot of research to do but one stipulation is having a dentist to sponsor me. Would you be willing to talk with me about your interest in and questions about being a sponsoring dentist?

The opening gives the dentists the opportunity to learn more about ECP and your interest in community dental hygiene. And since you are clear that you are just exploring it yourself, you provide the dentist with a graceful exit.

Q. What do I say after the dentist says, "Sure lets talk. What is the role of a sponsoring dentist?"

You can begin with the statute of Kansas Legislature (K.S.A. 65-1456). A dental hygienist is sponsored by a dentist licensed in the state of Kansas. This includes a signed agreement stating the dentist shall monitor the dental hygienist's activities. Read the entire statute before your discussion and have a copy of the statute with you for reference. In addition to the law, a few rules and regulations have been written pertaining to ECP: 1) the hygienist will submit to the sponsoring dentist the required patient assessment report no later than 30 days from the date of care and 2) the sponsoring dentist shall review each patient assessment report within 30 days of receiving the report.



Q&A

SPONSORING DENTIST

Q. What exactly is required of the sponsoring dentist?

A. The dentist is required to have a signed agreement with the hygienist, monitor the dental hygienist's activities, receive a copy of the findings (of the hygienist for each patient seen in an Extended Care Permit Site) and the report of treatment. Rules and regulations require the dentist to review each patients assessment report within 30 days of receiving the report

Q. What are the elements in the written agreement with the sponsoring dentist?

A. A hygienist and the sponsoring dentist need to write an agreement that fits their unique working relationship. At the same time, there are basic items to consider: patient populations and location of treatment; equipment, supplies, transportation of equipment and storage; report of findings; notice to patients about the preventive nature of the hygienist's ECP services; liability insurance and current license number. If the sponsoring dentist is also going to the fiscal agent- that is, collecting Medicaid reimbursements or fees for services and paying the hygienist- the financial arrangements may be included in the agreement.

Q. Once the dentist and I write the agreement , does it go to the Kansas Dental Board?

A. No, the Dental Board had not asked for copies of agreements between the hygienist and sponsoring dentist. The hygienist and dentist keep a copy of the agreement, and in some cases, the Extended Care Permit Site might ask for a copy of the agreement for its files.

Q. Who signs the agreement?

A. The law does not specify but usually agreements are signed by both parties: the dentist and hygienist.

Q. Is there a benefit for the agreement to be signed periodically, perhaps each two years- when hygienists renew their licenses?

A. The law does not require the agreement to be reviewed or resigned periodically, but it makes good sense to review the elements of the agreement and capture any changes that might have taken place. The dentist and hygienist can sign and date the changes rather than writing an entirely new agreement.

Q. Is there a time when a new agreement needs to be written?

A. If the hygienist changes sponsoring dentist, or Extended Care Site, there needs to be a new written agreement.

Q. Does the sponsoring dentist, any qualified dentist, or the client's personal dentist need to see those patients receiving extended care hygiene services in the 12 month period?

A. No, the Extended Care Permit law does not require any dentist to examine or provide treatment to the patients served by an ECP hygienist.



Q&A

SPONSORING DENTIST

Q. Can I have several sponsoring dentists? Under what circumstances might I need/want more than one sponsoring dentist?

A. The law requires that a hygienist have one sponsoring dentist. It does not preclude a hygienist from having more than one.

Q. If I provide ECP services in two different settings– long term care and Head Start– do I need different sponsoring dentists?

A. The law requires a hygienist to have a sponsoring dentist. A dentist may elect to sponsor a hygienist to provide services only to patients in long-term care facilities. Nothing in the law precludes the hygienist from seeking out a second dentist as a sponsor for another community site.

Q. May I have a sponsoring dentist different from the dentist who currently employs me?

A. Yes, the law does not specify the need for any current or previous working relationship between the hygienist and sponsoring dentist.

Q. What type of documents are needed for the dentist to “monitor” services in an extended care setting?

A. K.S.A. 65-1456(f)(6)&(g)(6) requires that the hygienist provide “a copy of the findings and the report of treatment” to the sponsoring dentist, but the law does not provide details. The hygienist and dentist need to come to an agreement on the content and format. Some Kansas hygienists have designed “hard copy” reports on paper; others have selected electronic formats. Some dentists helped craft the content of the reports and the format.

Q. For monitoring purposes, what obligation does the sponsoring dentists have in documenting responses to extended care hygienists’ reports?

A. The law does not require the dentist to respond to the hygienist’s reports. The written sponsorship agreement can spell out what individual dentists and hygienists decide is an appropriate procedure. The response may include a note on the reports, a written note or email to the hygienist, citing questions and concerns, or a phone call to the hygienists to discuss a patient.



Q&A

SPONSORING DENTIST

Q. Is the sponsoring dentist responsible to provide dental treatment to patients served by ECP hygienists?

A. No, under K.S.A. 65-1456 (f)&(g) the sponsoring dentist is not obligated to provide treatment for patients by an ECP hygienist. If dentists can not provide follow up evaluation and treatment services indicated by reports submitted by hygienists, they can play an important role by providing guidance to hygienists about alternative sources for dental evaluation and treatment.

Q. Can a dentist have a valid Kansas license, be practicing in another state and be a sponsor?

A. The law requires only that the dentist be licensed in the state of Kansas K.S.A. 65-1456 (f)(3)&(g)(3).

Q. What is an allowable fee for a dentist to serve as a sponsor?

A. No, it is determined between the hygienist and dentist.

Q. Is it possible to determine a fee structure based on the amount of time a dentist must spend to “monitor” his/her hygienist? Is there a different fee structure if the dentists office manager does all the billing?

A. As with many of the issues around ECP, hygienists and dentists must identify their own individual working relationships, including if the dentist require any fee for sponsoring the hygienist..

Q. What is the procedure if the sponsoring dentist wishes to terminate his/her sponsorship?

A. The terms and process for terminating the ECP sponsorship are part of the written agreement and are not determined by the ECP law. Every participating hygienist and dentist has the responsibility to design and agree upon a procedure for termination of sponsorship.

It is important for a hygienist to remember that he/she can not provide any ECP services without the continued sponsorship of a dentist. So, this must be taken into account when the termination agreement is written.

