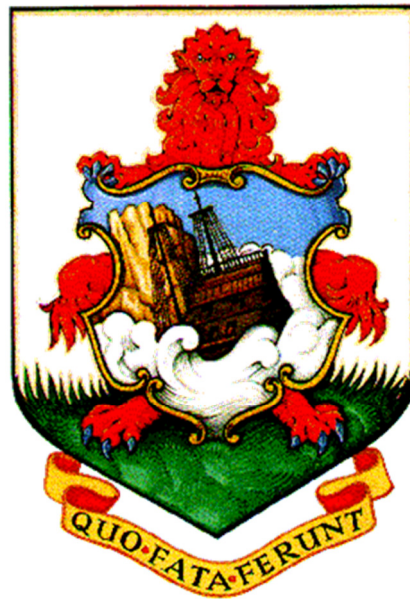


A BRIEF OF A BILL ENTITLED THE
**DENTAL PRACTITIONERS AMENDMENT
ACT 2019**



Prepared for

The Honourable Kim N. Wilson, JP, MP

Minister of Health

18TH March 2019

Dental Practitioners Amendment Act 2019

Overview of the Bill

Mr Speaker, I stand before this Honourable House today to present the Bill entitled the Dental Practitioners Amendment Act 2019.

Mr Speaker, the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) is responsible for the legislation that provides the framework for the regulation of healthcare professionals. The Dental Practitioners Act 1950 (the Act) is the legislation that guides the regulation of dentists, dental hygienists and dental technicians.

The Bermuda Dental Board (the Board) is the regulatory authority charged with ensuring high standards of professional competence and conduct for the dental profession and to advise the Ministry on issues pertaining to them. Accordingly, the Board and the Ministry's efforts to advance standards for professional practice are ongoing.

Mr Speaker, the Bill entitled the Dental Practitioners Amendment Act 2019 (the Bill) proposes to improve the regulation of dentists by making explicit provision for appropriate indemnity insurance coverage and registering dentists for specified procedures.

Mr Speaker, the Board has registration criteria that sets forth what is required to satisfy an application for registration as a dentist. Required documentation includes those documents that attest to the education and

professional qualifications, experience and character of an applicant. Additionally, the Board requires proof of indemnity insurance coverage for practice as a dentist and this requirement is currently outlined in standards for the profession in their statement of conduct.

Mr Speaker, indemnity insurance is a best practice standard for healthcare practitioners and it serves to protect the practitioners and the public from claims of negligence and malpractice. The Bill will update the Act and make indemnity coverage an express legal requirement for dentists. Most recently, this requirement was established in the Psychological Practitioners Act 2018. The proposed amendment for indemnity insurance coverage will not require any additional change to current practice because dentists already have a requirement for indemnity insurance coverage through established standards for their profession.

Mr Speaker, the Bill clarifies that the statement of conduct prepared by the Board includes standards for ethical conduct, standards of practice and scopes of practice for the dental profession. This amendment aligns the Act with the Ministry's other legislation for health professionals.

Mr Speaker, the Bill proposes that the Board have authority to register dentists for specified procedures and to enter these qualifications on the register. The Board has identified several procedures that require additional oversight in order to maintain high standards of professional competence and conduct. These specified procedures include dental implants and restorations, sedation, sleep medicine and cosmetic procedures involving neurotoxin (botox) and dermal filler injections. Some of these procedures

carry an increased level of risk for patients that may require an increase in the level of indemnity insurance coverage. Additionally, the Board needs to assure that dentists have received adequate education, training, and continuing education to perform these procedures.

Mr Speaker, the Board has best practice standards drafted for each of the specified procedures mentioned in this brief for inclusion in the statement of conduct for dentists. It is important to note that the proposal for the addition of standards will undergo consultation with the dental profession. This consultation process allows the Board to receive feedback and set reasonable and realistic timelines for compliance. Dentists who plan to perform or are currently performing these specified procedures will be given the opportunity to be a part of the discussion before they are held to any new standards.

Overall, **Mr Speaker**, the Bill entitled the Dental Practitioners Amendment Act 2019 ensures that the Board can continue to uphold high standards of professional competence and conduct essential for the safeguarding of public health.

Thank you, **Mr Speaker**.