

May 5, 2015

Lyndsay Knoell, DDS  
WDEB Board President

RE: The recommended length of a Nitrous Oxide Certification Course for Dental Hygienists

Dear Dr. Knoell,



I'm writing to state the Wisconsin Dental Hygienists' Association's justifications for requiring 12 hours of instruction for certification of dental hygienists to administer Nitrous Oxide.

First – we are mindful of licensure portability across state lines. Whenever a hygienist applies to become licensed in another state, they are asked about special certification courses they may have taken in the state where they are currently licensed. If the N20 course they completed is shorter, they are usually required to take another course in the new state. We hope that the length of Wisconsin's certification courses will match or exceed the majority of other states who allow hygienists to administer N20 in order to facilitate portability and reciprocity. We believe that number is 12.

Next – when developing the proposal for Wisconsin's certification course, WI-DHA consulted dental hygiene educators in Wisconsin and Minnesota about curriculum development. Together, we decided to recommend a proven model based on a specific topical outline, ideal sequencing and instruction for competency development in all aspects of N20 administration and patient management. To shorten the course by 1/3 would require eliminating vital elements of instruction.

Finally – in studying the requirements from other states, we learned that 13 out of 20 states require at least 12 hours of instruction for a N20 certification course. There are 11 other jurisdictions that do not specify the length of their courses and so these are unknown to us at this time. However, we do know that dental hygiene programs tend to incorporate N20 into their pain management courses ranging from 32 to 45 hours. We estimate that at least 12 of those hours are dedicated exclusively to N20 training.

For these reasons, we stand by our original request and recommendation that the length of the N20 certification course should be twelve hours. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Linda M. Jorgenson RDH BS'. The signature is written in a cursive style.

Linda M. Jorgenson, RDH, BS  
WI-DHA President 2014-15