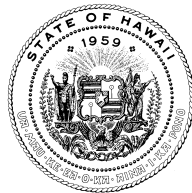


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October 27, 2025

Guidance Regarding the Role of the Dentist in the Treatment of Sleep-Related Breathing Disorders

The Hawaii Board of Dentistry (Board) is committed to protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the public by ensuring the safe practice of dentistry. Guidance is provided on the role of the dentist in the treatment of patients with sleep-related breathing disorders (SRBDs).

Hawaii Revised Statutes §448-1 defines the practice of dentistry. The scope of dentistry does not include the diagnosis of a SRBD. However, dentists are well positioned to notice signs and symptoms of SRBDs during dental visits (such as snoring, teeth grinding, or airway concerns). They may screen patients for risk factors and, if concerns are found, refer patients to a licensed physician for medical evaluation. If a physician recommends oral appliance therapy, a dentist can fabricate, fit, and monitor the oral appliance, while also managing possible dental side effects. Dentists may not order or interpret sleep tests as this falls outside the dental scope of practice.

The role of dentistry in the treatment of SRBDs includes recognition of risk factors and referral for medical diagnosis by a physician. Effective care for SRBDs requires collaboration. Dentists and physicians should work together to ensure patients receive safe, coordinated treatment.

This guidance is for informational and explanatory purposes only and is not an official opinion or decision and therefore is not to be viewed as binding on the Board or the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs.