



TDA Advocacy Efforts Protect Texas Dentists and Patients.

INSIDE: What TDA accomplished in the 87th Legislative Session



Teledentistry

Technology has changed how healthcare professionals can safely treat patients. The pandemic made it even clearer: patients need to be safely connected to dentists beyond the walls of a practice. **TDA worked with lawmakers and stakeholders to pass teledentistry legislation. HB 2056** permits teledentistry in Texas, while upholding the current standard of care and mandating proper dentist oversight, supervision, and delegation.



Insurance Reform

TDA helped pass **HB 3459**. Certain state-regulated insurers are now **prohibited from requiring dentists to obtain preauthorization** if they meet specific criteria.



Note: Bills with this icon have been signed into law by Governor Abbott. Bills not signed or vetoed by the governor as of the end of June become law.

Legal Protections

TDA partnered with lawmakers and stakeholders in support of **SB 6. Health care providers (including dentists) now have protections and defenses from liability** for injury or death arising from care, treatment, or failure to provide care or treatment relating to a pandemic disease or a pandemic disaster declaration.



TDA-supported **HB 7** amends the Texas Unemployment Compensation Act authorizing a debt repayment plan for the Texas Workforce Commission. This bill **protects dentists and other Texas employers who would have faced significant unemployment tax increases** associated with the pandemic.



Dental and medical billing services remain exempt from sales tax beginning January 1, 2022, thanks to TDA-supported **HB 1445**. Dentistry was excluded from the bill as filed—but **TDA worked to specifically include dental billing** within the legislation.



SB 678 requires the state to establish a loan program to provide financial assistance to small businesses affected by a disaster. **Most Texas dental practices will qualify as a small business and be eligible for a loan** to pay the business' payroll costs. This includes costs related to the continuation of health care benefits for the business' employees.



TDA-supported **HB 1195** clarifies that federal loans and grants under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, including Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans, are **exempt from the state franchise tax**.



TDA-supported **SB 437** authorizes the state to create a **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Reserve Advisory Committee**. TDA will work closely with the state and the committee as it makes future decisions about PPE storage and distribution during public health emergencies.



TDA-supported **SB 153** clarifies existing tax practices by excluding merchant credit and debit card processing services from being considered as taxable data process services. This **protects dentists that use data processing services** from being significantly burdened by extra sales and use taxes.



Dental Practice Protections

TDA-amended **SB 199** ensures that dentists remain able to independently purchase and maintain automated external defibrillators for their practices **without unnecessary physician oversight**.



TDA-supported **SB 1534** makes changes to remedial plans issued by the Texas State Board of Dental Examiners. The legislation authorizes the dental board to **remove the public posting of remedial plans** in certain situations.



Improved Texans' Access to Dental Care

Medicaid Dental Policy Review TDA supported efforts by the Texas Academy of Pediatric Dentistry to require the Health and Human Services Commission to complete a **comprehensive clinical review of the Medicaid dental program**.

Telehealth Expansion TDA-supported **HB 4** makes permanent most of the Medicaid and CHIP telehealth waivers that were implemented as part of the state's COVID-19

response. The legislation **expands the types of telehealth and telemedicine services** available to all program recipients.



Oral Health Improvement Program Rules TDA-supported **SB 970** amends the Oral Health Improvement Program (OHIP) statute to **align OHIP's current functions so that DSHS can better allocate agency resources, including personnel**.



Tobacco TDA, along with other key public health stakeholders, helped pass **SB 248**, which **updates tobacco and e-cigarette statutes** to increase compliance with the **legal purchase age of 21**.

Preserved Medicaid and CHIP Dental – Funding and Program Enhancements

TDA protected Medicaid and CHIP dental funding in **SB 1** from state budget cuts.

TDA supported efforts by the Coalition of Texans with Disabilities to pass **SB 1648**, creating a **new preventive dental benefit in Medicaid for adults with disabilities**. This new benefit will help prevent serious dental conditions and reduce dental-related emergency room visits for adults with disabilities.



Prevented Unwarranted Scope Expansions

Every legislative session there are attempts to expand the scope of practice of non-dentists. **TDA defeated all legislative proposals exposing Texans to a lower standard of dental care by non-dentists**.

For more information about these legislative issues above and others, please visit:
tda.org/advocacy/legislative/2021Wins

Are you a member? Members make our achievements possible. Without TDA members, we would not be able to advocate for Texas dentists and patients, and achieve legislative victories like these. **To join us, or to renew your membership**, please visit tda.org and click on the JOIN/RENEW button at the top of the page—or you can call 800-832-1145 and choose extension 137 to speak with a membership specialist.