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# TDA Advocacy Efforts Protect Texas Dentists and Patients.

INSIDE: What TDA accomplished in the 88<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislative Session



# Secured Dental Insurance Reform—New Safeguards for Dentists

TDA secured the passage of dental insurance reform for state-regulated insurance that brings much-needed insurance relief to dentists. **HB 1527** is an example of TDA's commitment to achieving a dental insurance landscape that promotes fairness and long-term success for patients and dentists.

Passage of this legislation:

- 1 Limits the circumstances under which a state-regulated insurance plan may recover an overpayment made to a dentist;
- 2 Prevents state-regulated insurance plans from both denying a dental benefit and prohibiting the dentist from collecting fees associated with the dental services provided; and
- 3 Requires state-regulated insurance carriers to follow fair and

accurate network leasing laws, which allow dentists to review contracts and decide whether to opt out before an insurance network is leased.

## Expanded Availability of Health Insurance Options Through MEWAs

TDA-backed **HB 290** expands MEWA eligibility to sole proprietors and professional organizations if those in the MEWA are in the same state. MEWAs are the basis for group health coverage offered through association health plans. TDA's insurance vendor is currently researching potential MEWA healthcare options for TDA members, their families, and staff. This is an exciting opportunity for TDA to potentially offer better health insurance options for member dentists.

## Achieved Legislation Authorizing Hygienist Administration of Local Anesthetic

In response to TDA member requests for dental hygienists to administer local anesthetic, TDA successfully guided **HB 3824** through the legislative process. The historic legislation, resulting from extensive TDA-led negotiations with the Texas Dental Hygienists' Association, authorizes Texas dentists to delegate under direct continuous supervision to properly educated and trained Texas-licensed dental hygienists the administration of local infiltration anesthetic to a non-sedated or nitrous oxide/oxygen inhalation sedated patient who is 18 years of age or older in the context of delivering hygiene services.

## Guarded Dentists from Onerous Patient Billing Requirements

TDA-amended **SB 490** ensures that dentists are not held to tedious itemized patient billing requirements. TDA's advocacy resulted in dentists being

removed from the bill so that the legislation focuses on its original intent of making hospitals provide itemized bills to patients upon request.

## Ensured Additional Study for Licensure Compact

At TDA's recommendation, the legislature agreed that more study is necessary to make an informed decision on whether Texas should participate in the Dentist and Dental Hygienist Interstate Licensure Compact. Considering the complexities and legal obligations involved for Texas to participate in the Compact, the legislative interim will give the time necessary to study dental workforce distribution in Texas and whether Compact participation is warranted.

## Enhanced Texans' Access to Dental Care

**SB 1854** requires the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) to make available an optional insurance plan that provides coverage for dental care to all TRS

retirees, dependents, and surviving spouses and surviving dependent children.

## Protected Medicaid Funding

Although TDA tirelessly advocated for a Medicaid dental fee increase, the legislature was unwilling to support the initiative that would have resulted in an ongoing increase to the state's budget. However, TDA did protect Medicaid and CHIP dental funding from budget cuts.

TDA knows the vital role that Medicaid plays in Texas' dental public health safety net. In 2025, TDA will continue advocacy efforts, pushing for a fee increase that aligns with the program's 2007 value when adjusted for inflation.



For more information about these legislative issues above and others, please visit:

[tda.org/advocacy/advocacy-news](https://tda.org/advocacy/advocacy-news)



**Are you a TDA member?** TDA's member-driven advocacy accomplished victories for dentists and Texas dental patients. Without TDA members, we would not be able to advocate for Texas dentists and patients and achieve legislative victories like these. Members make our achievements possible.

If you're not a member and see the value in how TDA advocates on your behalf, please consider joining us. You can scan the QR code to be directed to our Join Now page and the best part is that it's at half of the normal rate!

**Questions about joining? Call 512-443-3675, ext. 137.**

