

# Missouri Dental Hygienists 2026 Facts



**Missouri**  
DENTAL HYGIENISTS'  
ASSOCIATION



- Licensed and regulated by the Missouri Dental Board
- Licensure includes graduation from an accredited program, with didactic, clinical, and jurisprudence exams



- Education is generally 3 years in length (includes prerequisites)
- 84 credit hours for an associate's degree
- 118 credit hours for a bachelor's degree
- 3016 clock hours with 681 supervised preclinical/clinical hours of instruction



- There are currently six dental hygiene programs in Missouri
- Missouri has lost four dental hygiene program sites in the past few years due to lack of funding
- There is a need for dental hygiene providers, particularly in rural areas of Missouri
- Questions? Email us: [info@missouridha.org](mailto:info@missouridha.org)

## Dental Hygienist Perform Preventive and Therapeutic Oral Health Services

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|--|---|
| • Preliminary clinical exams of teeth and oral tissues | • Dental sealant placement                    |
| • Radiographs (x-rays)                                 | • Local anesthesia (pain control)             |
| • Oral Health Education                                | • Identification and treatment of gum disease |
| • Scaling and polishing of teeth                       | • Fluoride application                        |
| • Fillings with additional education                   | • Nitrous-oxide administration                |

- 107 out of 114 Missouri counties are designated as Dental Health Professional Shortage Areas (Dental HPSAs)
- As of December 2025, the Missouri Dental Board data indicates there are 3629 dental hygienists, 2674 general dentists and 558 specialists with an active license and a Missouri address
- With a dentist exam, hygienists can work without a dentist present up to one year
- Dental hygienists could be a part of the solution to the oral health crisis in Missouri if allowed to work to the full scope of practice and if burdensome supervision restrictions are removed



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# Legislative Priority 2026

## MDHA supports HB 1847 (Rep. John Hewkin) and SB 988 (Sen. Ben Brown): **Dentist and Dental Hygienist Licensure Compact**

- Interstate compacts are contracts/agreements between several states
- Requires seven states to agree before it begins
- Now implemented in IA, WA, TN, WI, KS, MN, OH, VA, ME, CO, AK, and NE
- Strengthens licensure portability and allows for multistate licensure
- Missouri borders 8 states
- Similar to use of a driver's license
- Dentists and hygienists who are licensed in one compact state member will be able to practice in other participating states through a "compact privilege"

### **Dentists and dental hygienists who want to apply in a participating state for a compact privilege must have:**

- An active and unrestricted license in a compact state
- Graduation from an education program accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA)
- Passage of the National Board Examination
- Completion of a clinical assessment (ex. board exam)
- No disqualifying criminal history

**Individual states will still have authority to uphold scopes of practice and individual rules.**

**Similar compacts in Missouri include nursing, physical therapy, emergency medical system, psychology, audio and speech language, occupational therapy, and medical.**

For more information, please contact [info@missouridha.org](mailto:info@missouridha.org)