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## Interpretive guidance for the definition of a prescription

On February 24, 2020, the Ministry of Health announced amendments to the regulations (scope of practice statements) for dental hygienists, dental technicians, denturists and dentists. One significant change that may affect the provision of services provided by denturists is the amended definition of prescription.

**The Denturists Regulation now defines a prescription as “an authorization, issued by a person who is authorized under the Act to prescribe a partial denture or overdenture, to dispense a partial denture or overdenture for use by a named individual”.**

### What is an authorization?

An authorization is permission or authority to do something.

### Who is authorized to prescribe a partial denture or overdenture?

Dentists are authorized under the *Health Professions Act* to prescribe a partial denture or overdenture as part of the patient’s treatment plan. The dentist and denturist must work collaboratively to ensure the treatment options are appropriate.

## Prescription Guidance

### 1. Prescriptions for dispensing a partial denture or overdenture to a patient may be written or verbal.

The authorization can be provided by a written prescription from the dentist for the patient or over the phone following the collaborative care discussions between the dentist and the denturist.

### 2. Prescriptions must be based on collaborative discussion and decision-making amongst the patient and the oral healthcare team.

The decision to prescribe a partial denture or overdenture will be based on collaborative discussion and decision-making amongst the patient, the denturist and

the dentist. This process will serve to enhance collaborative care amongst the entire dental team. Collaborative care includes pre-treatment assessment of the patient and review of the patient's medical record by all parties, and determination through discussion between the denturist and dentist of the patient's needs for and expectation of the partial or overdenture. The denturist and the dentist each must take responsibility according to their scope of practice.

If the prescription requires a dental technician to assist with the development of a partial denture or overdenture, the dental technician must review the prescription and be included in the discussion with the rest of the oral healthcare team and the patient.

### **3. Oral healthcare providers must have the education, knowledge and skills to authorize and fill the prescription.**

When a dentist creates a prescription, they must only authorize or request procedures with which they are familiar. This ensures that they are aware that the authorization or request is reasonable under the prevailing conditions, and that they would be able to assist with the management of circumstances that may occur during the completion of the prescription. If they are unfamiliar with the procedures or conditions potentially addressed by the prescription, the dentist should refer the patient to a practitioner with experience providing that service.

When a denturist receives a prescription, they must confirm that they understand the content of the prescription, and that they have the education, training, acquired skills, equipment and materials to undertake that portion of the work or treatment for which they will be responsible. If a denturist does not have the required competencies, they should refer the patient to another practitioner with experience providing that service.

### **4. Denturists must examine the patient to ensure they are in suitable condition for treatment.**

The denturist must examine the patient to ensure they are in suitable condition for the treatment to be undertaken. Where circumstances appear to be unsuitable for

placement of a prosthesis, a discussion with the prescribing dentist is necessary. For example:

- teeth that appear to have been inadequately prepared to receive a partial denture;
- the presence of mobile teeth that have not been stabilized; or
- inflamed oral tissues that have not been sufficiently prepared for receipt of a removable prosthesis.

A dentist may choose to issue a prescription for a given patient to cover a specific timeframe (e.g. three to six months). If this is the case, it is expected that the denturist will review, update and document the patient's medical status as well as revisit and determine the need for the partial denture or overdenture prior to dispensing. The denturist must engage the prescribing dentist in discussion should any changes be required.

## **5. Patient records must include thorough documentation of those discussions and decisions, including the authorization by the dentist.**

**It is expected the patient's treatment record will include:**

- The name of the denturist and dentist involved in the treatment.
- The type of denture being prescribed.
- The reason and/or rationale for the need to prescribe the partial denture or overdenture.
- Documentation about the prescription. If the dentist provides a verbal prescription, the denturist must document this in the patient record and sign it. If the dentist has provided a written prescription for the patient, a signed copy must be included in the patient's record.
- Any modifications to the prescription, whether written or verbal.

### **Reference documents:**

- [Ministerial Order M041](#) with amendments to regulations for Dental Hygienists, Dental Technicians, Dentists and Denturists (February 24, 2020)
- *Health Professions Act: Denturists Regulation*