

**WEST VIRGINIA BOARD OF DENTAL EXAMINERS
POSITION STATEMENT CONCERNING THE USE OF LASERS**

Promulgated March 13, 2004

Amended December 4, 2004

Amended July 21, 2022

The West Virginia Board of Dental Examiners has received inquiries regarding the use of lasers in the practice of dentistry. Most of these inquiries concern who may use a laser. The Board, in determining their position concerning this subject, has been in contact with dentists who are currently using lasers in their practice. The Board has also reviewed other state dental boards' positions on this subject.

The Board is aware of many varieties of dental lasers. Lasers can be used to replace or supplement traditional dental instruments, such as handpieces, scalpels, curing lights, and the explorer.

The Board regards the use of any laser which can cut tissue to be practicing dentistry, and therefore limits its use to dentists and hygienists who hold a certificate to perform non-surgical periodontal laser therapy as described in the Board's rules referenced below. This includes the so-called "low power" lasers used for periodontal treatments, such as pocket debridement, scaling, polishing, planing, and the removal of calculus deposits.

The Board will allow the use of lasers that are used as an alternative to a traditional curing light to be used by a dental hygienist or dental assistant for the sole purpose of curing resin restorations. In addition, the Board will also allow the use of the laser as a diagnostic aid by a dental hygienist or dental assistant for interpretation by the dentist.

The Board will keep abreast of changes in the use of lasers in dentistry and may choose to modify or amend this statement at anytime.

REFERENCED BOARD RULES 5CSR13 - EXPANDED DUTIES

5.1.14. Use of a laser, provided the wavelength is limited to no higher than 1064 nanometers, for laser bacterial reduction, laser assisted periodontal therapy, other non-surgical periodontal therapeutic treatments, photobiomodulation (adjunctive low level laser therapy) and treatment of herpetic lesions and aphthous ulcers after successful completion of a board-approved course and under the direct supervision of a licensed dentist.

5.1.14.a. A hygienist shall apply for a certificate from the Board to provide non-surgical periodontal treatment with the use of a laser using a form prescribed by the Board. The application fee shall be equal to the local anesthesia application fee as set forth in the Board's rule, Fees Established by the Board, 5CSR3.