

**IOWA BOARD OF DENTAL EXAMINERS  
POSITION STATEMENT – USE OF LASERS  
APRIL 17, 2003**

Publicity about the use of lasers in dentistry has generated considerable interest by dental and dental hygiene licensees. The Board office has received a number of calls concerning the Board's position with respect to utilization of lasers in the dental office. It is impractical for the Board to review every device and make a determination about the efficacy of each device, including all the various lasers.

The board has discussed several reports in connection with the utilization of lasers, including the October 2002 American Academy of Periodontology Statement Regarding Gingival Curettage.<sup>1</sup> This report reviewed published studies that utilized various methods for gingival curettage, including lasers, and concluded that “..there is no evidence that gingival curettage has any therapeutic benefit in the treatment of chronic periodontitis...the dental community as a whole regards gingival curettage as a procedure with no clinical value.”

The board discussed concerns that there is a greater potential for irreversible damage when using a laser. Keeping this in mind, the board adopted the following position statement concerning the utilization of lasers in the dental office.

The board recommends that all licensees need to be fully instructed in a recognized course prior to utilizing a laser. In addition, any services provided by a licensee, regardless of the device used, must be within the scope of practice for each licensee. Dental hygienists, for example, cannot utilize a laser or other device to cut tissue. Furthermore, all licensees should ensure the services they provide are within the standard of care.

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<sup>1</sup> American Academy of Periodontology. The American Academy of Periodontology Statement Regarding Gingival Curettage. *J Periodontol* 73, no. 10 (2002): 1229 – 1230.