

Are you aware of the benefits that an Expanded Function Dental Auxiliary (EFDA) can provide to a dental practice? If not, don't worry! Many dentists and dental team members are just now starting to learn about the functions and skills an EFDA can bring to the day-to-day of dental practices.

Many benefits of having an EFDA on staff includes an increased capacity to treat patients in managed care programs, lower overall operating expenses, and an increased ability to treat patients covered by Medicaid.

Dental private practices can also benefit greatly by hiring EFDAs. Over the past years, growth in digital dentistry continues to play an important role. With CAD/CAM all-ceramic crown and bridge production, patients can expect to achieve enhanced aesthetics with their dental restorations and prostheses. EFDAs can play a vital role in your practice by training as experts on scanning images and producing high-quality work. Simultaneously, they can decrease chair time required to fabricate a crown/bridge.

To keep up with growing demand, Washington state has approved two additional CODA-accredited EFDA schools in the past 24 months. The availability of these schools present exciting opportunities for dental assistants looking to expand their scope of practice and take on more advanced responsibilities within the dental office. Dentists can start the process by sponsoring their high-qualified dental assistants currently working at their practice.

EFDAs must receive additional training from a CODA-accredited institution and take and pass a written and clinical restorative exam. The Dental Assisting National Board (DANB) provides the written restorative exam (WARE). The clinical restorative exam is provided by either the [Western Regional Exam Board \(WREB\)](#) or [Central Regional Dental Testing \(CRDTS\)](#).

EPDA Approved Services

An EFDA can provide the same services as a dental assistant as well as [the following services under general supervision](#) of a dentist:

- Perform coronal polishing.
 - Give fluoride treatment.
 - Apply sealants.
 - Place dental x-ray film (including exposing and developing film); and
 - Provide patient oral health instructions.
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- In addition to [dental assistant duties](#), an EFDA can also place and carve direct restorations and take final impressions . The law provides a [complete list of allowable EFDA tasks in WAC 246-817-525](#). The day of an EFDA often begins early, with preparations made before the first patients arrive. This involves setting up treatment rooms, sterilizing equipment and ensuring all necessary materials are readily available. Additionally, EFDAs may review patient charts and treatment plans to familiarize themselves with the day's schedule and procedures and discuss cases with the dentist.

EFDA Role in Restorative Procedures

The teamwork approach maximizes efficiency and utilizes each professional's skills effectively:

- Dentist determines fillings needed.

- Hygienist may administer anesthetic for efficiency.
- Dentist prepares cavity and removes decay.
- EFDA completes the restoration:
 - Selects composite shade
 - Places composite resin in layers
 - Light cures each layer
 - Shapes composite with handpiece
 - Trims excess material
 - Checks bite
 - Polishes final restoration

EFDA's are very efficient with crown procedures. Once the dentist has prepped the tooth, an EFDA places cord, chooses the crown shade (with guidance and approval of the patient) and takes the final impression. Once the dentist ensures the impression meets all requirements, the EFDA can fabricate and cement the temporary crown and adjust the bite. EFDAs can also take digital impressions using CAD/CAM technology. Says a dentist currently working with an EFDA in a model of three to four chairs: *"In my experience, an EFDA allows a dentist to see more patients while decreasing burnout and additional stress. An EFDA steps in after filling preparation to place fillings and provide final adjustments as needed"*.

While some dentists and staff might feel integrating EFDAs into an established office workflow could be challenging, the key to success lies in training. When EFDAs are effectively trained in both restorative and final impression skills, and when they understand and embody the practice's philosophy for providing care, the result can be a win-win for everyone involved.

When EFDAs are empowered to work at the top of their license, they can take on more responsibilities within the dental office, relieving dentists and other staff members of certain tasks and allowing them to focus on other aspects of patient care. The EFDA approach increases practice efficiency and enhances the overall patient experience by ensuring care is delivered in a timely and effective manner.