

# MISSISSIPPI STATE BOARD OF DENTAL EXAMINERS

## FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN FOR FISCAL YEARS 2025-2029

### 1. Mission Statement

The Mississippi State Board of Dental Examiners ("the Board") is a legislatively-mandated state regulatory agency charged with the responsibilities of examining, licensing, registering, and regulating the practices of dentistry and dental hygiene to ensure competency (through examination and licensure) and ethics (through registration and regulation) among all dental professionals in the State of Mississippi for the ultimate goal of safeguarding and enhancing the health and welfare of the citizens of this State. As such, the Board is neither affiliated with nor functions as a subsidiary of any private or professional organization.

### 2. Philosophy

The Mississippi State Board of Dental Examiners' philosophy is to safeguard and enhance the health and welfare of the citizens of this State by fulfilling its responsibilities of examining, licensing, registering, and regulating the practices of dentistry and dental hygiene to ensure competency and ethics among all dental professionals in the State.

### 3. Relevant statewide goals and benchmarks

#### Benchmark 1 – Cost of Government

- The Mississippi Board of Dental Examiners (MSBDE) is a special funded agency and operates without additional taxpayer burden as all revenue received comes from license and permit applications and license fees.

#### Benchmark 2 – Government Efficiency

- Regulatory Efficiency: average length of time to resolution of documented complaints
  - MSBDE will set a goal to complete complaint investigations from the date of the filing of the complaint through Board determination to be an average of six (6) to nine (9) months.
  - MSBDE will set a goal to reducing the time of issuance of a license from date of application to issuance from 4-8 weeks to fourteen working days or less.
  - MSBDE has engaged with an online platform to issue the Jurisprudence exam electronically to all license applicants. This has decreased the need for prospective licensees to travel to the Board's office to take the exam. The timed exam can be administered electronically – worldwide.
- Number and average cost of regulatory actions taken by regulatory body and type of action.
  - MSBDE will continue to utilize emerging technologies to provide electronic access to licensing and investigative materials electronically to decrease mailing and delivery costs.
  - MSBDE will use emerging technology to provide a platform Board engagement without the need to travel and have in-person meetings. We will set a goal to have only 4-6 in-person meetings a year.
  - MSBDE Board staff are working reallocate job duties to allow the Deputy Director to take compliance related responsibilities. This will help ensure the Board is on target to meet the goals within the Strategic Plan, as well as, to ensure compliance with the issuance of licenses and permits and to ensure compliance with board disciplinary orders by licensees.

- State dollars saved by providing government services on-line (e.g., document retrieval, issuance of new permits, and license renewal).
  - MSBDE is enhancing our licensing and regulatory technology to provide a user-friendly online experience which integrates our licensing application and renewal processes into our website for ease of access.
  - MSBDE is moving to be 100% digitized environment. This will minimize the use of postage and supplies and will decrease the space needs for the storage of paper documents.
  - MSBDE is issuing renewals of licenses and permits in an electronic format. This further reduces postage, printing, and office supplies expenses.
  - MSBDE will work to reduce the use of office equipment and supplies. Over the next 2-5 years, we will move to more centralized printing, scanning, and faxing technology. We will minimize the use of individual office printers.

#### 4. Overview of the agency five-year strategic plan

With the hiring of a new agency executive director in FY23, as well as, the filling of open positions, the Board's trajectory to improve efficiencies and responsiveness to our licensees and the public is moving forward. The MSBDE has begun a process to evaluate the long-term needs of the Agency.

Over the next five years, the MSBDE must address the following:

- Office Space – The current office space of the Board located at 600 E. Amite Street, Suite 100, Jackson, MS 39201 has served the board well since the 1990's. Unfortunately, the building due to natural age and usage requires significant functional and cosmetic upgrades to meet the current need for accessibility and functionality. The current lease expires June 30, 2024.
- Network and System upgrades – The current IT Network server for the agency is no longer upgradable due to the age of the hardware. New equipment or an alternative method of data hosting is needed.
- Enhancement or change to the current Regulatory Case Management software. Due to the complexities of the licensing and permitting process as well as the diversity of requirement for each license and permit issued by the MSBDE, the current system has revealed deficiencies which will require additional enhancements or a transition to a regulatory specific software.
- Transportation needs – The Investigative team consists of two investigators covering the entire State of Mississippi. Better cost efficiencies will result by providing agency vehicles for the investigative team to use in the performance of the mandated investigative process. Two vehicles are needed.
- A reclassification of a current full-time position from an Administrative Assistant support position to a Customer Service IV/Licensing Representative will occur. With the increase in permitting due to the passage of the MSBDE Regulation 30 and the changes to Board Regulation 13, additional licensing support is needed.
- With the passage of Regulation 30, the requirement to complete initial and renewal facility inspections for dental offices where sedation services are performed requires the engagement of a statewide pool of current, active, permit holders to assist the Board in performing these inspections. The cost of these inspections will initially be absorbed by the Board until such time that an inspection fee is approved. The fee will help to recover future costs of providing these inspections. This will be significant financial obligation to the Agency over the next 2-3 years,

but the cost is marginalized by the protection of public health and safety with the oversight that the inspections will have for patients of all ages who may require minimal, moderate, or general anesthesia in their treatment plan.

Ongoing projects from past strategic initiatives include:

- The MSBDE determined a critical need in 2021 to augment the current staff with one (1) full-time Board Counsel position to work alongside and in conjunction with both Licensing and Investigations arms of the Agency. This has significantly impacted the need to use outside legal counsel and has had an overall financial savings to the taxpayers of the State of Mississippi, by reducing those costs and enhancing responsiveness to the legal and regulatory operations of the Board.
- IN FY23, MSBDE hired a seasoned regulatory investigator with experience in law enforcement and regulatory investigations. Because of the hiring of experienced investigators, the MSBDE Investigative team is working to improve the overall complaint filing to complaint resolution timeline.
- MSBDE continues to work to provide enhancements in communication to our licensees through the use of the licensing and regulatory management system. This system which was implemented in 2022 has allowed a transition to electronic applications and renewals for licenses, electronic access to file a complaint, and the electronic storage of all supporting records. In addition, the MSBDE staff are able to use statewide email blasts to all licensees as well as an electronic newsletter to better communicate with the dental community across the State. However, with the enhancements needed as a result of changes in State Laws and Board Regulations, deficiencies with the current system have been revealed. The Board is working with the software developer to find way to meet the needs of the Agency.
- The MSBDE will pursue additional enhancements and improve user experiences with the Board's website. This will enable a more efficient interaction with both licensees and the public. The ability to search for providers by license specialty, county, city, or zip code has been added to the Board's website in FY23, with future enhancements planned to expand to all licenses.
- The MSBDE's newsletter, *The Dental Digest*, has resumed and is sent in an electronic format quarterly. The ability to keep our licensees updated and informed of Board Regulations and emerging trends in dental health will enhance communication. Long-term a consistent communication platform may improve the delivery of care to the public and may decrease inadvertent violations of Board Regulations and decrease overall complaint volume by the public against licensees.

## 5. External/internal assessment

Factors which if they occur may impact the accomplishment of the goals or strategic plans:

- Changes in Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) policies and procedures which may impact licensees in the State.
- A significant increase or decrease in number of licensed dentists, dental hygienists, and radiology permit holders in the State of Mississippi.

- A significant Increase or decrease in the number of dentists and dental hygienists requesting licensure through credentialing in the State of Mississippi.
- A significant increase in requests for licensure under Miss. Code Ann. § 73-50-1, known as the “Military Family Freedom Act or Miss. Code Ann. § 73-50-2, known as the “Universal Recognition of Occupational Licenses Act.”
- With the approval of the amendment to the Board’s Regulation 13 which will allow licensed Mississippi dental hygienists to administer local anesthesia under the direct supervision of licensed Mississippi dentists, the volume of applications and ongoing renewals will impact the already maximized resources of the Board including both human resources as well as tools needed to administer and oversee these additional permits.
- A significant increase or decrease in the number of complaints received, investigations initiated, and disciplinary actions issued by the MSBDE.
- An increase in the program size and dental graduates for Mississippi’s accredited dental school, the University of Mississippi Medical Center School of Dentistry may impact the future resources available to the Board.
- Increase in the program size and dental hygiene graduates from the Mississippi accredited dental hygiene programs.
- Increase in the program size for any one of the current approved radiology seminar providers.
- Expansion of the dental hygiene programs to provide the required curriculum for a dental hygienist to apply to administer local anesthesia.
- Establishment of new dental or dental hygiene programs in Mississippi accredited the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA).
- Legislation affecting the Mississippi State Board of Dental Examiners.
- Legislation concerning mid-level providers or expanded function dental hygienists and dental assistants.
- Legislation impacting the University of Mississippi School of Dentistry, dental hygiene programs or dental assisting teaching institutions throughout the State.
- The loss of CODA accreditation by any Mississippi dental or dental hygiene program.
- Technological limitations or emerging advancements in computer hardware, software, information retrieval and management.

## 6. Agency’s goals, objectives, strategies, and measures by program

**GOAL 1:** To enhance access to dental health care for more Mississippians.

**OBJECTIVE:** To improve licensing efficiency and promote a greater number of dentists and dental hygienists in Mississippi obtaining licensure, while supporting the ease of access for the renewals of licenses for current licensed dentists and dental hygienists.

### STRATEGY 1

Improve the efficiency in the licensing and permitting application process by:

- Enhancing the electronic licensing management software to accommodate all application types
- Provide a stronger customer service support from the Board staff as evidenced by the reduction of the length of time between the application process and the issuance of a license

OUTPUT: Evidenced by the comparison of new licenses issued and renewals by comparing data over the past 5 years

OUTCOME: Measured by the year end number of licenses, permits, renewals, and registrations.

#### STRATEGY 2

To partner with the Mississippi's dental and dental hygiene programs to support the process of examination and licensing of graduates to encourage them to work in Mississippi.

OUTPUT: Engagement of the Board and Board staff with on-site visits and support to students in the dental profession and building partnerships with all of the current CODA accredited Mississippi Programs.

#### STRATEGY 3

Maintain active membership in national associations which promote a collaborative effort in supporting and recruiting dental professionals, ensuring clinical standards in examinations, and engaging in emerging national trends in the recruitment and retention of dental professionals.

**GOAL 2:** To operate the agency in an efficient manner to serve the citizens of the state of Mississippi and to provide a customer friendly culture to support the public at large with a responsive and professional interaction with the Board and Board staff as it relates to complaints or concerns.

OBJECTIVE: To maximize the use of available resources with a minimal monetary impact to the citizens of Mississippi and without the need to increase fees to licensees and permit holders.

OUTPUT: Decrease the time of investigations from date of filing to resolution to an average of 6-9 months.

#### STRATEGY 1

Receive complaints electronically and assign to investigative staff within five working days

#### STRATEGY 2

Ensure compliance with disciplinary actions and orders from the Board within the parameters set forth in the Board order.

#### STRATEGY 3

Ensure that both the complainant and the licensee is notified within five working days of the Board's resolution.

**GOAL 3:** To operate the agency in an efficient manner to serve current and prospective Mississippi licensees.

OBJECTIVE: To maximize the use of available resources without the need to increase fees to licensees and permit holders.

OUTPUT: Decrease the time between application submission and license issuance to fourteen working days.

**STRATEGY 1**

Receive all application types electronically.

**STRATEGY 2**

Ensure compliance with the issuance of licensing by building a collaborative team process which engages as needed licensing needs with legal and investigations to determine compliance with licensing standards.