

# MISSISSIPPI STATE BOARD OF DENTAL EXAMINERS

## FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN FOR FISCAL YEARS 2026-2030

### 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. All revenue for operations are received from license and permit applications, license fees, cost recovery for disciplinary actions.

#### 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 (14) 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 existing 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.
  - The Deputy Director has assumed additional responsibilities for compliance in FY 24. This has helped to ensure the Board is on target to meet the current and future, as well as, to ensure compliance with the issuance of licenses and permits and with board disciplinary orders.

- State dollars saved by providing government services on-line (e.g., document retrieval, issuance of new permits, and license renewal).
  - MSBDE has engaged with new licensing and regulatory software and will be transitioning to this system in FY 25. The system will 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. At present, we are at approximately 90% compliance with this objective. We have seen a decrease in the use of postage and supplies, as well as a decrease in the space needed 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 1-4 years, we will move to more centralized printing, scanning, and faxing technology. We will reduce 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 efficiency 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:

- 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 efficiency will result by providing agency vehicles for the investigative team to use in the performance of the mandated investigative process. Two vehicles are 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 a 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.
- With the retirement of an agency staff member in August 2024, the MSBDE leadership will evaluate the ongoing need for that position and will consider releasing full-time PIN.

Ongoing projects from past strategic initiatives include:

- Office Space – The lease for the Board’s office space located at 600 E. Amite Street, Suite 100, Jackson, MS 39201 ended June 30, 2024. In January 2024, a request for lease proposal was submitted with seven responses. The lowest bid was accepted, and the Board relocated in June 2024 to new office space at 715 S. Pear Orchard Road, Suite 200, Ridgeland, MS 39157. Despite a lack of upkeep by the property management over the almost 30 years that the Board office was in the old space, the proposal submitted during the FY24 request for lease process included a \$5.00 per square foot lease increase without a plan to update the space. The move to the new office suite will save \$3.00 a square foot over the next 5 years for the Agency.
- Network and System upgrades – Due to the equipment’s age, the Agency’s IT Network server has not been able to upgrade operating systems. This created a security concern with our data. In early FY25, the Agency transitioned the network to the private cloud infrastructure with the Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services. This transition has been at no cost to the Agency and has saved the funds which would have been needed to purchase a new onsite server.
- With a new hire in July 2024, a Customer Service IV/Licensing Representative position was filled but with a reorganization of job duties. This position will provide more administrative and office management support to the agency, as well as support for licensing and permitting, potentially allowing the Board to consider decreasing overall staff positions by one (1) in FY26.
- The Board has officially engaged with a new software developer and will be transitioning to a new licensing and enforcement management system in FY25. The new licensing management system has a proven record of reliability, adaptability, and functionality for Mississippi licensees. It is currently used by the Mississippi Medical Licensing Board, Mississippi Board of Nursing, and the Mississippi Board of Pharmacy.
- The MSBDE’s newsletter, *The Dental Digest*, will continue and will be sent in an electronic format biannually or more often as needed. The ability to keep our licensees updated and informed of changes in Board Regulations and emerging trends in dental health will enhance communication and compliance. The newsletter is sent electronically and therefore has no cost to the agency or State other than personnel time to create the newsletter.

## 5. External/internal assessment

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

- Changes in federal agency policies (ex. Drug Enforcement Agency) may impact licensees in the State.
- A significant increase or decrease in the 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. § 73-50-1, known as the “Universal Recognition of Occupational Licenses Act.”
- 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.
- Increase in the program size and dental hygiene graduates from the Mississippi accredited dental hygiene programs.
- 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 or the Dental Practice Act.
- Legislation concerning mid-level providers or expanded function dental hygienists and dental assistants not currently permitted in Mississippi.
- 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.
- Loss by resignation or retirement of key agency staff.

## 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 approvals to promote the expansion of the dental profession workforce in Mississippi by removing obstacles to the licensing process, while ensuring a user-friendly renewals of licenses process 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 culture from the Board's staff as evidenced by the reduction of the length of time between the application process and the issuance of a license
- Increase the number of Board meetings using an online platform for the purposes of expediting Board approvals of licenses and permits.

**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 and associations to support the process of examination and licensing of graduates and encouraging them to establish their professional career 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 the current CODA accredited Mississippi Programs.

**OUTPUT:** Engagement of the Board's leadership with the Mississippi Dental Association, Mississippi Dental Society, and the Mississippi Dental Hygiene Association.

### 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 to ten 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 to ten working days of the Board's resolution.

### STRATEGY 4

To increase the public's access to the Board staff via a safe and inviting office space with parking, accessibility by individuals with special needs, and improvement in a customer-friendly culture with the interaction of agency staff and the public at large.

### STRATEGY 5

To implement a social media presence for the agency to assist consumers of dental services by educating and engaging the public with educational information.

**GOAL 3:** To operate the agency in an efficient manner and 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 and supporting documents electronically.

#### STRATEGY 2

Ensure compliance with the issuance of licensing by building a collaborative team process which engages licensing needs with legal and investigations to determine compliance with licensing standards to promote education of licensees and to enhance the protection of Mississippi consumers of dental care.

#### STRATEGY 3

Zero acceptance of payments of applications or Board issued fines in office by directing all payments thorough the Board's online portal to expedite the licensing process.