



MISSISSIPPI STATE BOARD OF DENTAL EXAMINERS
FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN FOR FISCAL YEARS 2028-2032

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Executive Summary

The Mississippi State Board of Dental Examiners exists to protect the public through the licensure, regulation, and oversight of dentistry and dental hygiene in Mississippi.

During FY2028–2032, the Board will focus on five strategic priorities:

- Modernizing licensing through technology
- Improving regulatory efficiency
- Expanding public transparency
- Strengthening the dental workforce
- Maintaining responsible fiscal stewardship

The Board remains committed to protecting the citizens of Mississippi while reducing unnecessary regulatory burdens and providing outstanding customer service.

1. MISSION STATEMENT

The Mississippi State Board of Dental Examiners (MSBDE or "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.

The Board desires to be recognized as a trusted, innovative, and responsive regulatory agency that promotes excellence in the dental profession while ensuring public protection. The Board pursues the core values of integrity, transparency, accountability, professionalism, service to the public, and collaboration.

3. RELEVANT STATEWIDE GOALS AND BENCHMARKS

Statewide Goal: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Benchmark – JOB GROWTH (healthcare)

- Implementation of a user-friendly licensure application and licensure renewal online system
- Implement and expand licensure pathways created through legislative action including reducing barriers for expedited licensure by reciprocity and military/military family members processes
- Ongoing review of Board Rules to reduce barriers and access to licensure in Mississippi

Statewide Goal: GOVERNMENT AND CITIZENS

Benchmark – COST OF GOVERNMENT: *Individual tax burden*

- The Mississippi Board of Dental Examiners is a special fund agency that operates from revenue received from license and permit applications, license and permit renewal fees, and cost recovery related to disciplinary actions. The operation of the Board has no impact on the general fund budget of the State of Mississippi.

Benchmark - GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY: *Average wait time for state government services*

- Reduce the average licensing processing time
- Utilize emerging technologies to provide electronic access to licensing and investigative materials
- Enhance the Board's website functionality to increase electronic self-service transactions to 95% of all Board interactions
- Decrease the dependence on mailings and delivery
- Allow for real-time correspondence through the licensing and enforcement portal and reduce the burden of submission of application and licensure required documents
- Increase the access of publicly available Board materials using the Board's website and related new software
- Work with the Mississippi Legislature to pass the Interstate Dental and Dental Hygiene Licensing Compact to enhance licensure in Mississippi

Benchmark – GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY: *Regulatory efficiency*

- To complete complaint reviews and investigator assignments in no more than seven (7) workdays
- To reduce the time from investigation initiation to final Board disposition
- To provide user friendly access to the public to verify licenses and to access Board disciplinary orders
- To utilize emerging technology and software to decrease communication gaps and to centralize all correspondence during the investigative process
- To ensure, when appropriate, investigative costs are recovered through board orders

Benchmark - GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY: *Number and average cost of regulatory actions taken*

- Enhance regulatory oversight and provide quarterly reports to the Board regarding pending investigations
- Assign case management duties to one central staff to ensure benchmarks are met

Benchmark - GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY: *State dollars saved by providing government services online*

- Integration of licensing, investigations, legal, and compliance into one regulatory system
- Ensure that application and license renewal processes are always accessible to remove barriers which prevent timely submissions and approvals
- Move to a 100% digital environment for all licensing and permitting processes, payments, and access to all services electronically both for applicants, licensees, and the public
- Issuing renewal certificates for licenses and permits in an electronic format only

4. OVERVIEW OF THE AGENCY'S FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

Ongoing projects from past strategic initiatives include:

Technology:

- Network and System upgrades – MSBDE decommissioned all internal data storage equipment and transitioned the agency's network and data to the private cloud infrastructure with the Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services. This transition was at no cost to the Agency initially and has saved the funds which would have been needed to purchase a new onsite server. However, due to the passage of SB 2653, it is projected that FY28 may add an additional significant cost burden for data storage with MS ITS Optimization Plan.
- The Boardroom has been furnished with improved technology that allows for greater online presence and attendance.

Communication:

- 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.
- Increase utilization of social media
- Website functionality enhancements and reorganization, including developing resource pages and a "quick links" tab
- The Board's Executive Director visits annually with the University of Mississippi Medical Center's School of Dentistry – Dental and Dental Hygiene graduating students to answer questions regarding licensing procedures. In addition, the Executive Director visits annually all Dental Hygiene programs to review licensing procedures with graduating students.
- Attendance, engagement, and guest presenters with state associations and other stakeholder organizations

Office and Accessibility:

- The Board relocated office space selecting the lowest lease per square foot, while providing increased parking and accessibility to the public and licensees. This has increased accessibility to Board's staff and engagement in Board and Board committee meetings through in-person attendance.

Enforcement:

- Improved the investigative process by implementing a preliminary review to determine if a complaint meets the threshold to necessitate an investigation of a potential violation of the Mississippi Dental Practice Act. Those complaints that do not meet the threshold are set for remand by the Board. This process has significantly reduced the time from complaint to final disposition.

5. EXTERNAL/INTERNAL ASSESSMENT

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

AGENCY STRENGTHS:

- Experienced staff
- Increase in the use of enhanced technology for better efficiency
- Financial self-sufficiency without recent increase in application or license fees

AGENCY CHALLENGES:

- Small workforce
- Stagnant licenses and permits totals

OPPORTUNITIES:

- Technology modernization and responsible use of AI
- Expanded online services
- Emerging opportunities for Interstate Compact licensing pathway
- Upcoming increase in State output for number of graduating dentists and dental hygiene students including a new dental hygiene program

POTENTIAL THREATS:

- A significant decrease in the number of licensed dentists, dental hygienists, and radiology permit holders through retirement or leaving the State
- A significant increase in the number of complaints received, investigations initiated, and disciplinary actions issued by the MSBDE
- Legislation affecting the Mississippi State Board of Dental Examiners or the Dental Practice Act
- Legislation concerning mid-level providers, expanded function dental hygienists, and dental assistants who are not currently permitted in Mississippi
- Increasing or volatile technology costs
- Loss by resignation or retirement of key agency staff
- Data protection and cybersecurity threats

6. AGENCY'S GOALS, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES, AND MEASURES BY PROGRAM FOR FY2028-2032

The Mississippi State Board of Dental Examiners is comprised of one program with three divisions including:

- **Licensing Division**
- **Enforcement and Compliance Division**
- **Legal Division**

The Licensing Division functions as the gateway for applications and renewals of all licenses, permits, and registration reporting requirements. The Licensing Division issues dental, dental specialty, and dental hygiene licenses under three primary pathways – Examination, Credentials, and Reciprocity. In addition, the Licensing Division issues permits to dental assistants who perform in-office radiographs, mobile and portable dental units, dentists providing sedation services, facilities in which sedation services are performed, and local anesthesia permits for dental hygienists. The Division also manages applications for corporate trade names of dental practices. The Division registers eligibility of hygienists to practice under general supervision and manages the dental authorizations thereof. Finally, the Licensing Division maintains a list of licenses that are active, but who are not actively practicing in Mississippi.

The Licensing Division maintains all licensee data and ensures biennial renewals are processed and that all contact and documentation remain active and up-to-date.

The Enforcement and Compliance Division monitors and enforces the Mississippi Dental Practice Act and Board Regulations. The Division works with State and Federal enforcement agencies in ensuring compliance with federal registration requirements and to assist in monitoring for potential drug diversion activity. This Division also works with the public in obtaining information regarding complaints for which the Board is tasked with investigating. This division assists agency consultants in performing inspections of facilities where sedation services are performed.

The Legal Division is tasked with providing counsel to the Board as it relates to needed legal guidance related to compliance with the Dental Practice Act and Board regulations and development or amendment of new or current Board regulations. Finally, the Legal division prosecutes violations of the Dental Practice Act, Board regulations, or the illegal practice of dentistry.

GOAL 1: Protect the Public Through Effective Regulation

Objective: Safeguard the health, safety, and welfare of Mississippi citizens by ensuring timely, fair, and effective enforcement of the Mississippi Dental Practice Act and Board regulations

Strategies and Outputs

- Receive complaints electronically and assign them for initial review and assignment to an investigator within seven (7) working days
- Reduce the average time from complaint initiation to final Board disposition to between six (6) and nine (9) months
- Ensure compliance with all disciplinary orders and monitor completion of Board-imposed requirements
- Notify both complainants and licensees of Board actions within ten (10) working days
- Continue collaborative investigations with state and federal regulatory and law enforcement partners
- Expand electronic case management capabilities

GOAL 2: Improve Licensing Services and Strengthen Mississippi's Dental Workforce

Objective: Improve licensing efficiency and expand access to the dental workforce by providing a modern, user-friendly electronic licensing system while reducing unnecessary barriers to licensure

Strategies and Outputs

- Enhance the electronic licensing and enforcement system to support every application and permit type
- Expand electronic submission of applications, renewals, supporting documentation, payments, and communications and eliminate any need to mail documents or payments
- Maintain an application-to-license issuance goal of ten (10) business days or fewer upon receipt of a complete application

- Continue partnerships with Mississippi dental and dental hygiene programs and professional associations to: educate graduates, encourage practice in Mississippi, and remove unnecessary barriers to licensure
- Maintain active participation in national organizations supporting examination standards, workforce recruitment, and regulatory best practices
- Ensure staff are cross-trained and develop succession plans

GOAL 3: Modernize Agency Operations and Technology

Objective: Maximize the use of agency resources through technology, responsible fiscal management, and customer-focused service and public transparency while avoiding significant fee increases

Strategies and Outputs

- Maintain a fully integrated digital environment for licensing, investigations, compliance, legal operations, and public services
- Enhancement of the Board's website, online services, and electronic communications to reduce mailing costs and improve public access
- Promote a customer-focused culture through responsive communication, accessible facilities, and expanded public education, including social media
- Conduct periodic workload, succession, and staffing assessments to ensure efficient allocation of agency resources
- Continue evaluating emerging technologies to improve operational efficiency, cybersecurity, transparency, and service delivery
- Maintain compliance with the Mississippi ITS cybersecurity standards as well as the State's policy on the use of Artificial Intelligence
- Maintain disaster recovery and continuity of operations plans in compliance with State policy and procedures
- Work with current software vendors to develop real-time public dashboards displaying current license statistics for public transparency
- Implement a continuing education management platform for users to maintain continuing education requirements and ensure compliance with Board regulation requirements for continuing education

Conclusion

Through this Five-Year Strategic Plan, the Mississippi State Board of Dental Examiners reaffirms its commitment to protecting the public while providing efficient, transparent, and innovative regulatory services. By modernizing technology, strengthening licensing services, improving regulatory efficiency, and maintaining responsible fiscal stewardship, the Board is well positioned to meet the evolving needs of Mississippi's dental profession and the citizens it serves during FY2028–2032.