

The Dental Assisting National Board, Inc. (DANB) has researched job titles for dental assistants across the entire United States to develop a single chart to view the landscape of the profession. Without a single, nationally-accepted set of guidelines that govern the practice of dental assisting in the country, it is difficult to execute a concise overview of this valuable dental team member.



The chart on the next page illustrates the various job titles given to different job function levels across the United States. Some job titles are directly from the state’s dental practice act. Others are from a state’s administrative rules, noted specifically, implied by definition, or used in practice. In an effort to see a pattern, there is an overlay column on the left-hand side of the chart entitled, *Standardized National Job Titles from the Position Paper of the ADAA/ DANB Alliance: Addressing A Uniform National Model For the Dental Assisting Profession* that was distributed throughout the oral healthcare and legislative communities in September 2006. By positioning a standardized job title structure as a ruler, per se, one can attempt to discern if a national view of career ladder patterns for dental assistants might exist.

Attempting to view a “national road map of job titles” by referencing this chart is misleading, however. The difficulty in such a chart is that a dental assistant’s job title varies, even if he or she is allowed to perform the same duty, depending on the state in which the dental assistant is employed.

For example, to be considered qualified to perform coronal polishing procedures, here are some of the various titles a dental assistant must be qualified to hold, depending on the state in which this coronal polishing procedure was being performed:

- Advanced Dental Assistant (ADA)--SD
- Certified Ohio Dental Assistant (CODA)--OH
- DANB Certified Dental Assistant (CDA)--MA, MO, NC, OH
- Dental Assistant II (DA II)--NC
- Dental Assistant Qualified in Coronal Polishing (DA Qualified in Coronal Polishing)--AZ, KY, NE, NM, KS, IL
- Dental Assistant Qualified in Expanded Functions (DAQEF)--MO, NH

While a national study of job titles and defined or implied career ladders for dental assistants is fascinating and often frustrating due to the many variations, it is more importantly critical for dental assistants to know what job titles their state dental practice act defines and allows, and what duties are legally allowed to be delegated to qualified dental assistants so they can perform them in their role on the dental team. It is unfortunate that the work load of the office may lead to a situation where a dental assistant is asked to perform, or makes a decision to perform a function that he/she may not be qualified or legally allowed to perform. Accessing the other state-specific resources on DANB’s website to identify state-specific dental assisting titles, required qualifications, and allowable duties is a way to promote safe and legal dental assisting practice.

Dental Assisting Job Titles in the U.S.

Expanded Functions Dental Assistant

Expanded Function(s) Dental Assistant-EFDA
(FL, ID, ME, OH, OR, PA, VT)

Expanded Duties Dental Assistant-EDDA
(CO, GA, LA, OK, SC)

Dental Assistant Qualified In or To Perform Expanded Duties/Functions
(IL, MO, NH, TX, WV)

Dental Assistant with State Certification in Expanded Functions-(NM)

Dental Assistant with Expanded Duties Training-(KS)

Advanced Dental Assistant-(SD)

Dental Assistant Qualified in General Duties-(MD)

Licensed Expanded Function Dental Auxiliary-(2008-WA)

Registered Dental Assistant Qualified In or To Perform Expanded/Extended Duties/Functions-(CA, MI, MN, TN)

Registered Dental Assistant with Expanded Duties Training-(IA)

Registered Restorative Assistant in Extended Functions-(CA)

In addition to these 'conceptually global' dental assisting designations, some states have specific qualifications to provide assistants with permits, licenses, endorsements, or certificates in specific expanded functions. (Other states allow qualified dental assistants to perform some or all of these duties, plus others, under the more conceptually global 'umbrella' term of RDA, EFDA, etc.) The states listed below provide specific endorsements/permits/certificates /registrations/licenses for these functions:

Monitoring nitrous oxide/oxygen analgesia (or sedation) administration
(AR, CA, IL, MI, NC, NH, OK, SC, SD, TN, TX, WV)

Coronal polishing
(AZ, AR, CA, CO, IL, KY, KS, NC, NE, NH, NM, OK, TN)

Application of temporary soft relines to full dentures
(OR)

Administering & monitoring nitrous oxide/oxygen analgesia (or sedation)
(KS, MN)

Pit and fissure sealants/fluoride varnish
(CA, IL, MN, ND, NM, OK, TN, TX, WA)

Take final impressions for indirect restorations
(MI)

Inducing, administering, & monitoring nitrous oxide/oxygen analgesia (or sedation)
(CO)

Place, condense, and carve amalgam
(MI)

Provisional crown and bridge restorations
(NH)

Restorative and prosthetic duties (TN)

Anesthesia administration (VA)

In-office whitening (NH)

DANB Certified Dental Assistant or Registered Dental Assistant

In some states, this section is the highest level of dental assistant, equivalent to EFDA's in other states.

DANB Certified Dental Assistant (CDA®)
(MA, ME, MO, NC, NH, NY, OH, RI, VT)

Registered Dental Assistant (RDA)
(AR, CA, IA, MI, MN, ND, NJ, TN, TX) (2008-WA)

Registered Restorative Assistant
(2008-CA)

Dental Assistant II
(NC)

Graduate Dental Assistant
(NH)

Formally-Trained Dental Assistant (MA)

Certified Ohio Dental Assistant (OH)

State-licensed "certified dental assistant" (NY)

Dental Assistant

Dental Assistant
(AK, AL, AR, AZ, CO, CT, DC, DE, FL, GA, HI, ID, IL, IN, KS, KY, LA, MD, ME, MI, MN, MO, MS, ND, NE, NH, NM, NV, OK, OR, PA, RI, SC, SD, TX, UT, VA, WA, WI, WV, WY)

Dental Auxiliary
(MT)

Practical Dental Assistant-(TN)

On-The-Job Trained Dental Assistant-(MA)

Dental Assistant I
(NC)

Basic Qualified Personnel-(OH)

Qualified Dental Assistant-(ND)

Traditional Dental Assistant-(VT)

Unlicensed Dental Assistant-(CA, NY)

Unregistered Dental Assistant-(NJ)

Entry Level

Dental Assistant with a Limited Permit-(NY)

Dental Assistant Trainee-(IA)