



STATE OF MAINE  
DEPARTMENT OF PROFESSIONAL  
& FINANCIAL REGULATION  
OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL REGULATION



Janet T. Mills  
Governor

Penny Vaillancourt  
Director

Joan F. Cohen  
Commissioner

**TESTIMONY OF  
PENNY VAILLANCOURT, DIRECTOR**

**OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL REGULATION  
DEPARTMENT OF PROFESSIONAL AND FINANCIAL REGULATION  
NEITHER FOR NOR AGAINST; OPPOSE IN PART L.D. 2206**

**“AN ACT EXPANDING ACCESS TO ORAL HEALTH CARE BY CREATING A NEW PATH FOR OBTAINING A  
LICENSE TO PRACTICE DENTISTRY ”**

**BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES**

**PUBLIC HEARING: TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2026 AT 1:00 PM**

Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and Members of the Committee, I am Penny Vaillancourt, Director of the Office of Professional and Occupational Regulation (“OPOR”). OPOR has 38 licensing boards and programs including the Board of Dental Practice (“Board”). Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of OPOR regarding LD 2206.

The Board’s sole purpose is to protect the public health and welfare of Maine citizens. The board carries out this purpose by ensuring that the public is served by competent and honest practitioners and by establishing minimum standards of proficiency in the professions regulated by the board by testing, licensing, regulating and disciplining practitioners of those regulated professions. *See* 32 M.R.S. § 18321 LD 2206 amends the Dental Practice Act by creating a new dentist licensure category, Associate Dentist license, that would authorize an individual who has a degree in dentistry to practice in a board-approved setting under the supervision of a fully licensed dentist pursuant to a written practice agreement. This bill also identifies a pathway for full dentist licensure for an individual who obtained 6 years of experience as a licensed dentist associate.

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This bill is one of many recommendations reported out by the Commission to Expand Access to Oral Health Care by Studying Alternative Pathways for Obtaining a License to Practice Dentistry (Resolve 2025, Chapter 107). OPOR supports the creation of the new licensure category of Associate Dentist so long as there is clarification in identifying the educational standard for licensure noted below. However, OPOR is opposed to allowing an individual to substitute supervised experience in meeting the minimum educational standard of a doctoral degree in dentistry for full dentist licensure as a basic principle of public protection.

OPOR and the Board have been working closely with stakeholders over the past seven years to develop pathways to licensure for foreign trained dentists and dental hygienists. In 2020, the Board amended its rules governing licensure by endorsement authorizing the Board to review, on a case-by-case basis, equivalent education for applicants who obtained a dental/dental hygiene degree from a program that was not accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA). In addition, the Board proposed legislation in 2021 creating pathways for initial licensure to recognize foreign trained dental professionals in jurisdictions outside of the US and Canadian provinces (PL 2021, c.163).

And finally, in 2023 when the Dental Board joined OPOR, an additional endorsement pathway to licensure became available to applicants pursuant to 10 M.R.S. § 8003-H. OPOR provided licensing data to the Commission demonstrating that existing licensure pathways are not preventing foreign trained dentists from seeking licensure which is attached for the Committee's consideration.

As the Committee continues to review this proposal, in addition to our concern with lowering the educational standard for full licensure, below are technical observations requiring further clarification:

#### Section 4 – Associate dentist licensure qualifications

- Define “degree in dentistry” to establish a minimum educational standard or core curriculum standards for purposes of obtaining a third-party educational equivalency report.

#### Section 7 – Associate dentist practice requirements

- The practice agreement should require the supervisor to review patient records.
- The practice agreement should require consultation with the supervisor when identifying treatment plans with patients with medical conditions and/or complex medical histories.



Information regarding existing pathways to licensure, number of licenses issued to foreign trained dentists and other licensing data provided to the Commission is attached for your reference.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our conditional support for this bill and I would be happy to answer any questions now or at the work session.





Professional & Financial Regulation

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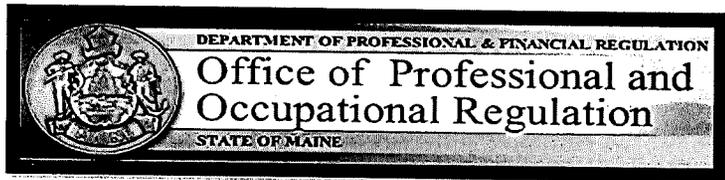
## Commission to Expand Access to Oral Health Care by Studying Alternative Pathways for Obtaining a License to Practice Dentistry

### **Licensure Pathways to Practice Dentistry in Maine**

Presented October 8, 2025 by

Penny Vaillancourt, Director, Office of Professional and Occupational Regulation (OPOR)  
Jeffrey R. Walawender, D.D.S., Chairperson, Maine Board of Dental Practice (MBDP)

Office of Professional and Occupational Regulation [maine.gov/pfr/professionallicensing](https://www.maine.gov/pfr/professionallicensing)  
Maine Board of Dental Practice <https://www.maine.gov/dental/index.html>



## Who is the MBDP and what is its role?

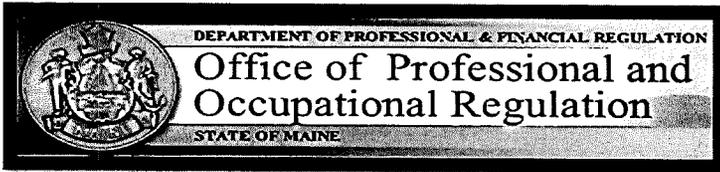
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The Maine Board of Dental Practice (MBDP) is one of 38 licensing programs within the Office of Professional and Occupational Regulation (OPOR). Its sole statutory purpose pursuant is:

“...to protect the public health and welfare. The board carries out this purpose by ensuring that the public is served by competent and honest practitioners and by establishing minimum standards of proficiency in the professions regulated by the board by testing, licensing, regulating and disciplining practitioners of those regulated professions.” See 32 M.R.S. Section 18321

The MBDP protects the public in three key ways:

1. By issuing licenses to applicants who have met minimum competency standards and qualifications set in statute;
2. By providing a **complaint mechanism** to allow members of the public to submit complaints against licensees and by **imposing discipline**, when warranted; and,
3. By adopting board rules to amplify the meaning and intent of licensing laws through the Maine Administrative Practice Act.



**MBDP Member Composition**

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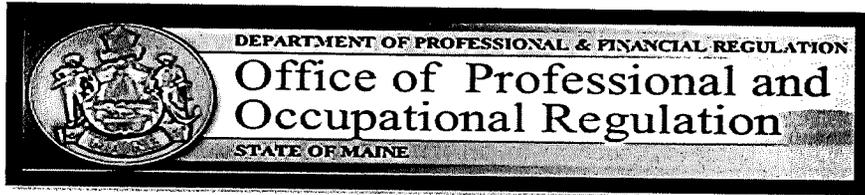
**Board Composition - Gubernatorial Appointments**

**Board Membership:**

9 members (5 dentists, 2 hygienists, 1 denturist, 1 public member)

**Current Members of the Board:**

- Jeffrey R. Walawender, D.D.S. - Chair
- Kathryn Walker Norris, RDH, EFDA, MSEd – Vice Chair
- Nicole Wasilewski, RDH, IPDH, MSCN
- Gregory V. Sarka, D.D.S., M.D.
- Lawrence D. Bossong, D.D.S.
- Peter R. Shumway, D.M.D.
- Jacob Roskelley, D.M.D.
- Vacant, Denturist Member
- Vacant, Public Member

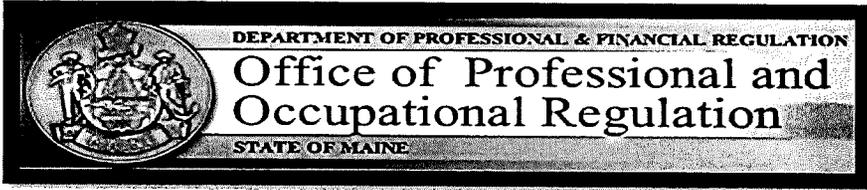


**MBDP Licensing Data as of  
October 1, 2025**

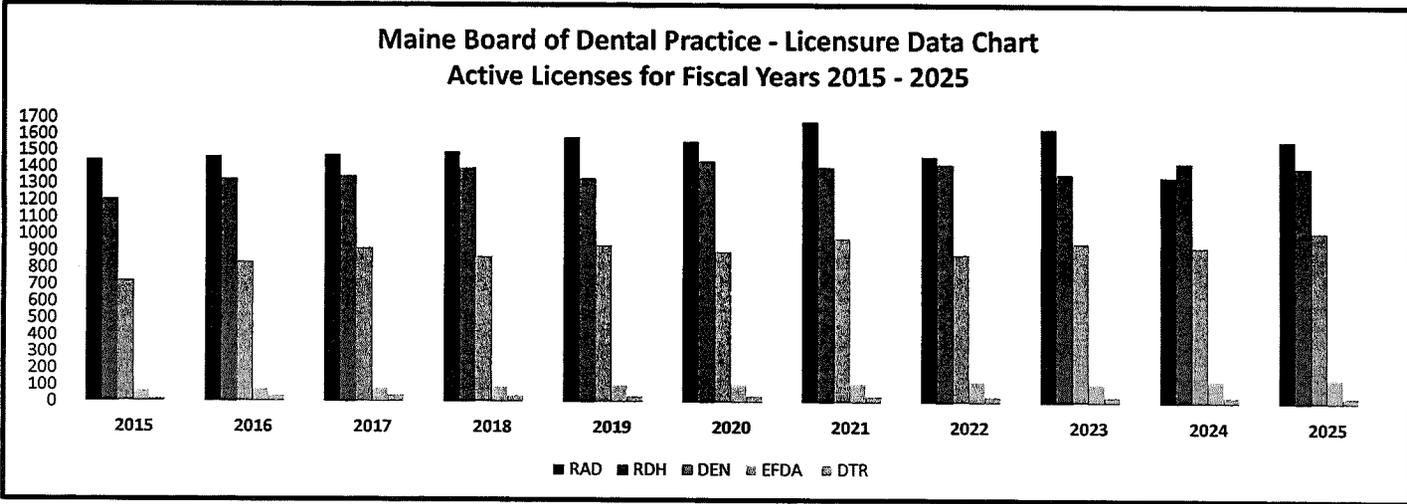
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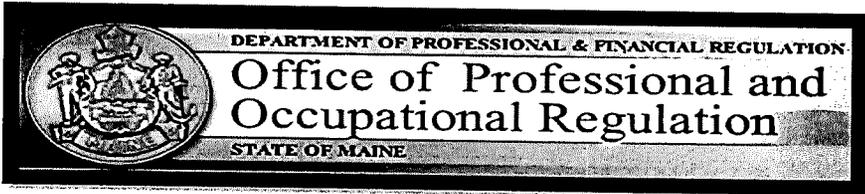
## **Current Number of Active Licenses, Authorities and Permits Issued by the MBDP:**

- 1,085 dentists (includes 1 faculty, 9 residents, 14 temporary)**
- 42 denturists**
- 1,459 dental hygienists and the following authorities (includes 5 temporary):**
  - 262 independent practice dental hygiene
  - 37 public health dental hygiene
  - 2 dental therapy
  - 906 local anesthesia administration
  - 411 nitrous oxide analgesia use
- 162 expanded function dental assistants**
- 1,640 dental radiographers**
- 110 sedation and general anesthesia permits**



**MBDP License Data Chart A**

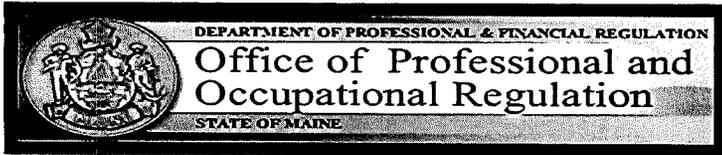




**MBDP License Data Chart B**

Licensing Data – Fiscal Years 2015 - 2025						TOTALS
	RAD	RDH	DEN	EFDA	DTR	
2015	1447	1211	727	69	22	3476
2016	1466	1334	839	80	39	3758
2017	1478	1351	922	87	45	3883
2018	1498	1401	873	97	45	3914
2019	1588	1342	941	110	40	4021
2020	1564	1445	904	111	44	4068
2021	1687	1410	984	119	43	4243
2022	1477	1428	891	132	43	3971
2023	1644	1370	959	120	44	4137
2024	1354	1439	937	142	45	3917
2025	1571	1412	1029	153	42	4207
As of 10/1/2025	1640	1459	1085	162	42	4388





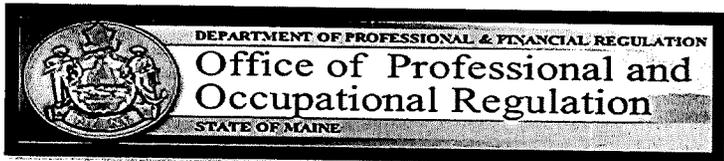
**MBDP Dentist Licensing Data – Chart C**

**Five (5)+ Year Licensing Data – All Dentist Licensure**

<b>Calendar Year</b>	<b># Licenses Issued</b>	<b># Foreign Trained Dentists Licensed</b>
2025 – current	79 (49% endorsement)	9
2024	98 (55% endorsement)	10
2023	83 (68% endorsement)	10
2022	82 (42% endorsement)	8
2021	75 (57% endorsement)	10
2020	76 (54 % endorsement)	2

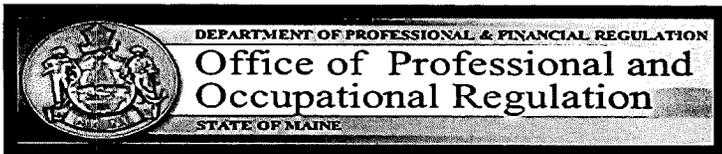
In 2020, the Board amended its rules governing licensure by endorsement to recognize licenses in other jurisdictions beyond those of the U.S. and Canadian provinces, and in 2021 proposed legislation to create a new licensure pathway for foreign trained dentists and dental hygienists who did not obtain a degree accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA).





**Dentist Licensure Categories – each category includes pathway for foreign trained and/or equivalent licensure in another jurisdiction.**

License Type	Education/Other	Examination	Conditions on Practice
Dentist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CODA accredited doctoral degree in dentistry; or</li> <li>the educational equivalent of a doctoral degree in dentistry as determined by the Board</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrated National Board Dental Examination (INBDE) or Parts I and II of the former examination (NBDE)</li> <li>Regional examination (clinical practice examination)</li> <li>Maine's jurisprudence examination (governing statutes and rules)</li> </ul>	N/A
Faculty Dentist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Active dentist license in another jurisdiction</li> <li>Letter from employing school</li> </ul>	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited to practice in educational/board approved satellite settings</li> </ul>
Limited Dentist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as dentist above</li> <li>Proof of previous Maine license or active license in another jurisdiction</li> </ul>	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited to practice in a nonprofit clinic w/out compensation</li> </ul>
Resident Dentist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as dentist above</li> <li>Supervision plan</li> </ul>	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited to a board approved supervision plan showing setting, procedures and dentist supervisor.</li> </ul>
Temporary Dentist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Verification of an active dentist license in another state in good standing</li> </ul>		



## MBDP Standard Licensure Pathway

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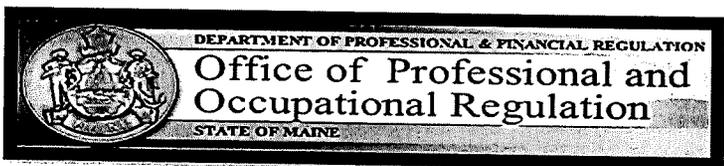
### Standard Pathway to Initial Dentist Licensure – 32 M.R.S. § 18342(1)

**This pathway looks at the individual applicant's qualifications to meet the following:**

- Educational qualifications: a CODA accredited doctoral degree in dentistry; or the educational equivalent of a doctoral degree in dentistry as determined by the Board; and
- Successful passage of the national, regional and jurisprudence examinations.

**When determining educational equivalency, the board will consider the following information:**

- Official reports of educational equivalency to a doctoral degree in dentistry from organizations recognized by the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services. WES and ECE are two such organizations that are commonly used with the MBDP; and
  - Additional post educational training accredited by CODA.
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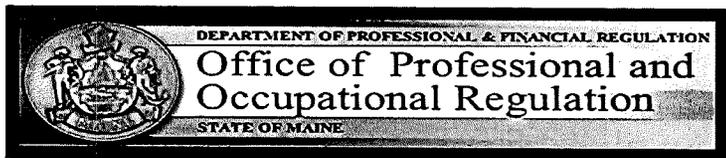


## MBDP Endorsement Licensure Pathways

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### Three Endorsement Pathways to Dentist Licensure

- **10 M.R.S. § 8003-H. Licensure by endorsement**
  - This pathway requires the board to determine if the license held in another state is substantially equivalent.
- **32 M.R.S. § 18347(1). Substantially equivalent license with three (3) years active practice preceding application.**
  - This pathway requires the Board to determine if the license held in another jurisdiction is substantially equivalent.
- **32 M.R.S. § 18347(2). Substantially similar qualifications with less than three (3) years active practice preceding application.**
  - This pathway requires the Board to determine if the individual's qualifications are substantially similar in meeting the initial requirements for licensure (education and examination)



## DDH Licensure Compact Status

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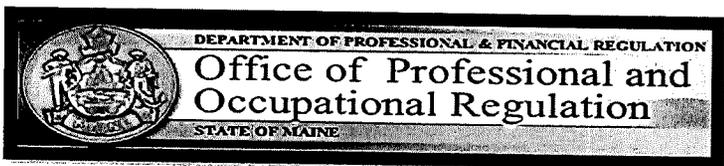
### Dental and Dental Hygiene Licensure Compact (DDH)

**Maine is a member state and the Executive Director serves as a member of the Commission. The compact is active but is not yet issuing compact privileges. Below are highlights of recent compact meetings:**

- First meeting held August 28, 2024 with five meetings held in 2025.
- Established governance documents, bylaws, and various committees.
- Proposed draft definition of “clinical assessment” but sent the proposal back to the Rules Committee for further language review.
- Reviewed RFI information to begin identifying a licensing platform.
- Estimated timeline is 18-24 months to implement.
- Other participating compact states are: Washington, Virginia, Ohio, Tennessee, Arkansas, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska, Colorado and Kansas.

<https://ddhcompact.org/>





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**Questions?**