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NEW STUDY: DENTAL ASSISTANT LICENSING UNNECESSARY

Dental assistants are licensed in only nine states, and in Oklahoma only since 2015.

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK (March 3, 2021) – The 1889 Institute has published “[Dental Assistant Licensing in Oklahoma](#),” which applies criteria the Institute has applied to other licensing laws and finds the need for dental assistant licensing wanting. The questions asked by the 1889 Institute inquire about serious risk to the public and whether incompetent practitioners are difficult to detect. Since dental assistant work does not pose serious risk and incompetents are easy to sort out, there is no reason for licensing them.

“Was Oklahomans’ dental health suffering prior to 2015, when the dental assistant licensing law was passed?” wondered Spencer Cadavero, author of the paper and Research Associate at the Institute. “One would think there would be scores, or at least a dozen, stories of mangled mouths as a result of dental assistant malpractice for the legislature to pass such a law, but no such stories exist or are likely to,” he said.

The 1889 Institute has repeatedly pointed out the fact that licensing laws are almost always pursued by the very groups they regulate. Licensing laws block opportunity for new individuals to newly enter occupations and raise prices for consumers, enriching those already in newly licensed occupations.

“This licensing law is only the latest of a long and growing list of licenses that have been reviewed and adjudged unjustified by the 1889 Institute,” said Cadavero. “If the legislature does not have the courage to undo past errors, then it should pass something like 1889’s model bill that would encourage groups of individuals within a private occupation to form private certifying organizations that would compete with each other,” he said.

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About the 1889 Institute

The 1889 Institute is an Oklahoma think tank committed to independent, principled state policy fostering limited and responsible government, free enterprise and a robust civil society. The publication, “What States Can Do to Improve Health Savings Account Incentives” and other reports can be found on the nonprofit’s website at www.1889institute.org.