



American
Dental
Hygienists'
Association

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February 12, 2020

The Honorable Cathy Giessel
Alaska State Capitol, Room 111
Juneau, AK 99801

Sent via E-mail:

Sen.Cathy.Giessel@akleg.gov

The Honorable Ivy Spohnholz
Alaska State Capitol, Room 421
Juneau, AK 99801

Sent via email:

Representative.Ivy.Spohnholz@akleg.gov

Dear Senator Giessel and Representative Spohnholz,

On behalf of the American Dental Hygienists' Association (ADHA), the largest national organization representing the professional interests of dental hygienists across the country, I am writing to share our support for HB 127 and SB 68. Thank you for carrying these bills and for your leadership to improve oral health access in the State of Alaska.

ADHA works to ensure access to quality oral health care and promote the highest standards of dental hygiene education, licensure, practice and research. Our association affirms that dental hygienists are competent to provide dental hygiene services without supervisionⁱ. As you are aware, the path to licensure for dental hygienist includes graduation from a Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) program. Specifically, CODA accreditation requires graduates be competent to perform procedures within a licensee's scope of practice.

ADHA advocates that dental hygiene and/or dental practice acts be amended so that the services of dental hygienists can be fully utilized in all settings. Furthermore, ADHA supports oral health care workforce models that culminate in graduation from an accredited institution; professional licensure; and direct access to patient care. ADHA defines direct access as the ability of a dental hygienist to initiate treatment based on their assessment of a patient's needs without the specific authorization of a dentist, treat the patient without the presence of a dentist, and maintain a provider-patient relationship.ⁱⁱ

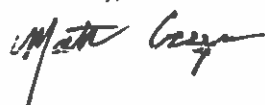
In 1995, five states allowed direct access. Currently, 42 states, including Alaska, have policies that allow dental hygienists to work in community-based settings to provide preventive oral health services without the presence or direct supervision of a dentist. Allowing dental hygienists to practice under an advanced practice permit will further improve upon Alaska's direct access and provide additional opportunities for the safe and effective care provided by dental hygienists in order to reach patients in need.

The policies cited above are further supported by research demonstrating the impact dental hygienists have on access to care and public policy recommendations supporting dental hygienists providing care in direct access settings, including:

- In December 2018, the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services (HHS), Treasury, and Labor in collaboration with the U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and White House offices, made policy recommendations on state and federal policies to improve choice and competition in the health care markets. The report says dental hygienists can safely and effectively provide some services offered by dentists, as well as complementary services. It goes on to recommend states should consider changes to their scope-of-practice statutes to allow all healthcare providers to practice to the top of their license, utilizing their full skill set. It also recommends that States eliminate requirements for rigid collaborative practice and supervision agreements between dentists and hygienists that are not justified by legitimate health and safety concerns.ⁱⁱⁱ
- The National Governor's Association specifically says, "the rationale that state dental boards most commonly used for restricting hygienists from practicing in unsupervised settings focuses on concerns about quality and safety, even though no clear evidence exists to support such restrictions."^{iv}
- The FTC previously wrote to the Georgia Board of Dentistry regarding regulation of dental hygiene supervision. In the letter, FTC staff stated "sound competition policy calls for competition to be restricted only when necessary to protect the public from significant harm. Here, we are aware of no evidence of past or future harm from current practices."^v
- The Oral Health Workforce Research Center concluded in 2016 that "Scopes of practice which allow dental hygienists to provide services to patients in public health settings without burdensome supervision or prescriptive requirements appear to increase access to educational and preventive care."^{vi}

Dental hygienists are skilled and competent oral health professionals. Allowing dental hygienists to practice under advanced practice permits is an important step to improve oral health access in Alaska. ADHA is pleased to join the Alaska Dental Hygienists' Association, the Alaska Dental Society, the Alaska Board of Dental Examiners, and others in supporting the establishment of an advanced practice permit for dental hygienists. If you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Ann Lynch, ADHA Director of Advocacy and Education, at 312-440-8942 or AnnL@adha.net.

Sincerely,



Matt Crespin, RDH, MPH
President

Cc: Katrina Virgin, RDH, MSDH, Alaska Dental Hygienists' Association President
Lisa Bryant, EFRDH, BSDH, Alaska Dental Hygienists' Association Legislative Committee Co-Chair
Royann Royer, RDH, Alaska Dental Hygienists' Association Legislative Committee Co-Chair
Yuri Morgan, Alaska Dental Hygienists' Association Lobbyist
Annette Lincicome, BS, RDH, ADHA District XII Trustee
Ann Battrell, MSDH, ADHA Chief Executive Officer
Ann Lynch, ADHA Director of Advocacy and Education

ⁱ American Dental Hygienists' Association. (2019). *Policy Manual*. Retrieved from: https://www.adha.org/resources-docs/7614_Policy_Manual.pdf

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2018). *Reforming America's Healthcare System Through Choice and Competition*. Retrieved from: <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/Reforming-Americas-Healthcare-System-Through-Choice-and-Competition.pdf>

^{iv} National Governors Association. (2014) *The Role of Dental Hygienists in Providing Access to Oral Health Care*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nga.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/1401DentalHealthCare.pdf>

^v U.S. Federal Trade Commission Staff Comment to Georgia Board of Dentistry. 30 Dec 2010. Retrieved from https://www.ftc.gov/sites/default/files/documents/advocacy_documents/ftc-staff-comment-georgia-board-dentistry-concerning-proposed-amendments-board-rule-150.5-0.3-governing-supervision-dental-hygienists/101230gaboarboarddentistryletter.pdf.

^{vi} Oral Health Workforce Research Center. (2016). *Development of a Dental Hygiene Professional Practice Index by State, 2016* [Health Workforce Policy Brief]. Retrieved from http://www.oralhealthworkforce.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/SOP_Policy_Brief_2016.pdf.

April 4, 2019

As your constituent and a licensed dental hygienist in the state, I want you to know that I support SB 68. This legislation will improve the public's access to oral health care by allowing licensed dental hygienists to provide care under an advanced practice permit after completing 4000 clinical hours.

As a dental hygienist serving the people of Alaska for only 9 months in the Yukon Delta, but have been practicing in the State of Michigan and Florida since 2010, I have personally seen the need to increase oral health care in our state. Many children miss valuable days in school due to tooth pain. Children with poor oral health not only suffer from physical pain but also emotional stress due to a lowered self confidence. I would love to be able to help improve oral health in areas that are under-served.

There is great need for oral health services in Alaska. According to Oral Health America's "A State of Decay" report on the challenges of accessing oral health care for older adults (Vol. IV, 2018), Alaska ranked 30th among all 50 states. The report highlighted 31.2 percent of seniors aged 65 or older have severe tooth loss. Additionally, the PEW Center on the States' report "The Cost of Delay" (2010) found 26.2 percent of third graders had untreated cavities.

Please support access to oral health care in Alaska by passing SB 68. Thank you for your consideration.

I am proud to call Alaska my new home and would love the opportunity to better service my community and surrounding villages that are in great need for oral care and education.

Sincerely,
Curtis Krumlauf, RDA, RDH, BSDH

907-545-3161

Ckrumlauf16@gmail.com

P.O. Box 2855

Bethel, AK 99559



March 4, 2019

The Honorable Cathy Giessel, Senate President
State Capitol
120 4th Street, Rm. 3
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Re: Support for Senate Bill 68 – Dental Hygienist Advanced Practice Permits

Dear Senator Giessel,

I am writing on behalf of the Alaska Dental Hygienists' Association (Alaska DHA), the professional organization representing registered dental hygienists in the state, to express our strong support for SB 68. This legislation would make great improvements in access to oral health care by establishing an advanced practice permit for dental hygienists.

SB 68 would allow dental hygienists who have practiced a minimum of 4,000 hours to practice under an advanced practice permit and eliminate the need for a collaborative agreement. The advanced practice permit will improve the public's access to oral health care providers.

Alaska DHA is aware that dental diseases disproportionately affect our state's most vulnerable populations. There is unmet need for oral health services in Alaska. *The Alaska Oral Health Plan (2012-2016)* reports high caries rates in elementary students as high as 62%. Children with special health care needs are at an even higher risk for caries and barriers to routine access to dental care. The American Dental Association's *Alaska's Oral Health and Well-Being Report (2015)*, indicates low income individuals do not obtain oral health care due to: cost (63%), afraid of dental work (25%), inconvenient location (38%), trouble finding a provider (22%), and not having original teeth (15%). Additional statistics report, one in three adults avoid smiling and one in three experience anxiety due to the condition of their mouth and teeth.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS) selected oral health as high priority within the *Healthy People 2020* initiatives, as growing evidence associates oral diseases, specifically periodontal disease, to several other systemic disorders including diabetes mellitus, pneumonia, heart disease, and stroke. In pregnant women, periodontal disease has been associated with low birth weight and preterm births. A significant determinant of oral health is the ability to access oral health care. The USDHHS calls for efforts to be made to overcome barriers to access oral health care.



Registered dental hygienists (RDHs) are licensed professionals that are valued members of the health care workforce. RDHs receive their training through universities and colleges that are accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA). RDHs are highly educated and trained to deliver oral health care prevention services to the public, safely and effectively. Our national association, the American Dental Hygienists' Association, affirms dental hygienists are competent to provide dental hygiene services without supervision.

Eliminating collaborative agreements is further supported by a recent report released by the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services, Treasury and Labor, in consultation with the U.S. Federal Trade Commission and White House offices. The report recommends, "States should consider eliminating requirements for rigid collaborative practice and supervision agreements between physicians and dentists and their care extenders (e.g., physician assistants, hygienists) that are not justified by legitimate health and safety concerns."¹

Alaska DHA supports SB68, which would allow dental hygienists with 4,000 clinical hours the ability to practice to the full extent of their professional education and training. Dental hygienists with advanced practice permits have the potential to expand access to care, promote quality of life, healthy development, and healthy behaviors across all life stages of our Alaskan population.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

Katrina Virgin

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Katrina Virgin, RDH, MS
President, Alaska Dental Hygienists' Association
P.O. Box 240247
Anchorage, AK 99524
Kvirgin.ak.rdh@gmail.com

¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2018). Reforming America's Healthcare System Through Choice and Competition. Retrieved from: <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/Reforming-Americas-Healthcare-System-Through-Choice-and-Competition.pdf>

4-3-19

Dear Senator Giessel,

As your constituent and a licensed dental hygienist in the state, I want you to know that I support SB 68. It would improve peoples access to oral health care throughout the state. having been born and raised here in Anchorage Alaska I know about the needs of our state with its the size and diversity; not everyone has access to the dental care that they need. This legislation will improve the public's access to oral health care by allowing licensed dental hygienists to provide care under an advanced practice permit after completing 4000 clinical hours.

As a dental hygienist serving the people of Alaska for 9 years, I have personally seen the need to increase oral health care in our state. Many adults and children with special needs do not receive the oral health care they need. I worked for six years with special needs clients through the Arc of Anchorage and Hope Community Resources and saw firsthand as a personal care attendant the lack of oral healthcare education and training staff gets. As a dental hygiene student, I was able to train staff at the pioneer home on proper oral health care and cleanings there the staff told me it was the first time they had been trained in how to properly brush teeth. I also have a brother with special needs and know the extra work it takes in order to keep the mouth healthy daily In a patient with special needs. When this bill this passes it'll make it easier for hygienist to access patients who need our help. Dentists don't always have time to get out of the office and be available and able to go into Homes, group homes, schools and facilities that need help providing oral care.

Please support access to oral health care in Alaska by passing SB 68. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely

Minna Allen RDH

Life Long Alaskan

Cook Inlet Dental Hygienists' Association Vice President

17201 Golden View Dr anchorage AK 99516

Minnaputnam@gmail.com

(907) 317 5154

4-3-19

Subject: Support for SB 68

Dear Senator Giessel,

As your constituent and a licensed public health minded dental hygienist in Alaska, I want you to know that I support SB 68. This legislation will improve the public's access to oral health care by allowing licensed dental hygienists to provide care under an advanced practice permit after completing 4000 clinical hours.

I work with the Southcentral Foundation and for nearly six years I have seen the challenges presented daily from people not having easier access to care with children, elderly, adults, and special needs populations that come to my clinic usually as a result of pain because it would cost too much to travel to Anchorage for preventive care. I would love to be able to provide care in a rural setting, maternity setting, elder home, WIC office, school, any setting where access is a challenge to provide care needed to improve oral care which in turn improves overall health and well being.

There is great need for oral health services in Alaska. According to Oral Health America's "A State of Decay" report on the challenges of accessing oral health care for older adults (Vol. IV, 2018), Alaska ranked 30th among all 50 states. The report highlighted 31.2 percent of seniors aged 65 or older have severe tooth loss. Additionally, the PEW Center on the States' report "The Cost of Delay" (2010) found 26.2 percent of third graders had untreated cavities.

Please support access to oral health care in Alaska by passing SB 68. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lisa Bryant, RDH, BSDH

4730 S. Crabapple Ct. Palmer,

Alaska, 99645

[907-441-8727](tel:907-441-8727)

Lbryant_rdh@yahoo.com

March 6, 2019

I would like to encourage your support of the bill which would address serious deficiencies in the access to dental health care in the state. I am a dental hygienist who has been practicing in Alaska for over 4 decades and have served in just about every leadership position in the Alaska State Dental Hygienists Association and two terms on the Board of Dental Examiners.

The last few years in clinical private practice have shown a decided shift (downward) in the number of patients who seek care as the dental insurance plans (which are not true insurance, just a copayment or reimbursement of costs which has been to the same level for the past four decades) have been discontinued or pared down. It is sad to say, but this is what actually drives many patient visits—just having the coverage. As a result, our patients are having fewer preventive visits, and this is especially true of the young families (many of whom have no coverage) who are struggling financially and the elderly.

At a presentation from one of the pediatric physicians of the Tanana Clinic here in Fairbanks a few years ago, she stated that dental caries (cavities) was the second most prevalent childhood disease of children in Alaska. This disease is preventable and treatable! Dental hygienists' education and practice focuses on the prevention and on some modes of treatment of this disease, putting the dental hygienist as the foremost professional in early intervention and education.

This bill would eliminate some barriers to access that are obstacles to care that is desperately needed by many, many Alaskans! The dental hygienists are here, and well equipped to reach out to patients who have, in many cases, needless dental pain—which can escalate to very serious health issues. An infection in the mouth (which includes both dental decay and periodontal disease) is an infection in the head, which with all of the blood vessels in the area, is rapidly a systemic problem—that is throughout the body.

This is an urgent problem- it is time to make a step toward solution—one which I think will be multifaceted. This bill is well written and deserves the legislative support.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Ann Cerney, RDH,BS
1420 Ithaca Rd,
Fairbanks, AK 99709
(907) 322-3598

4-3-19

Dear Senator Giessel,

As your constituent and a licensed dental hygienist in the State of Alaska, I want you to know that I adamantly support SB 68. This legislation will greatly improve the public's access to oral health care by allowing licensed dental hygienists to provide care under an advanced practice permit after completing 4000 clinical hours.

I have been in the Dental field for over thirty years and made my home in Alaska, the only state in which I elected to become licensed when I graduated Dental Hygiene School in 2014. My first job here was in Barrow. Never have I seen a greater need for oral health care. The incidence of tooth decay is disturbing, and the level of poor overall oral health is not worth the time to discuss. Action is needed. I am ready.

Please support access to oral health care in Alaska by passing SB 68. Thank you for your consideration and your service to our state.

Sincerely and Most Respectfully,

Eric D. Constable, RDH

690 S. Knik Goosebay Rd.
Wasilla, AK 99654

(907) 795-0813

arcticdentalprovider@yahoo.com

The Honorable Cathy Giessel, Senate President
State Capitol
120 4th Street, Rm 3
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Re: Support for Senate Bill 68- Dental Hygienist Advanced Practice Permit

Dear Senator Giessel,

As we have discussed before, I believe SB 68 will benefit the state of Alaska greatly by increasing dental access to care. This Bill has the ability to provide preventative dental care to a broad spectrum of Alaskans. Starting with expecting mothers, research indicates basic oral homecare and preventative dental services may prevent preterm, low birth weight babies. From there on, we as dental hygienists educate mother and child on proper homecare, dietary concerns and disease prevention. As life progresses and we age new obstacles arise. We retire and lose our employer sponsored insurance. Preventative dental services often get tossed aside once living on a fixed income. Overall systemic health declines and we increase our medications causing adverse dental effects. Lack of oral hygiene increases causing more systemic health related issues and the cycle continues. Tooth loss, poor nutrition, weight loss, chronic pain and risk of aspiration pneumonia rises. Unfortunately this is the common path of many older Alaskans living in long term care facilities. SB68 will allow license dental hygienists with an Advanced Practice Permit to bring their education and services directly to the patient decreasing the oftentimes large barrier of transportation.

I feel passionate SB68 will help increase access to Alaskans. Allowing licensed dental hygienists to work at the full potential of their education in our communities is imperative. Alaska overall has less dental providers, no dental schools, and a single dental hygiene program. We also have high rates of dental disease at high cost of treatment. This equation is costly to our communities.

Many states have adopted direct access, allowing dental hygienists to work outside of the traditional dental office setting. These states recognize that dental hygienists are primary care providers who are a liaison for oral systemic health.

Best regards,

Melissa Davis RDH

Date: April 3, 2019 at 9:29:13 PM AKDT
To: Senator.cathy.giessel@akleg.gov
Subject: <mailto:jane.conway@akleg.gov>

Senate Bill 68

I've been a dental hygienist for 35 years. I graduated from The University of Iowa Dental School with a Bachelors in Dental Hygiene in 1984.

With this bill it would allow qualified dental hygienists to help with community services and possibly go private practice. My program taught us to not only pick up and diagnose intra oral problems, but health related problems associated with the oral cavity. Throughout my 35 years I've helped pick up and diagnose early cases of oral cancer, diabetes, leukemia, sjorgrens syndrome, heart problems etc. This helps to save lives, keeping our patients healthy throughout life. More people go to the dentist than their physicians. So, we help guide them to the proper physicians to seek treatment if needed. A dental hygienist is also trained to help diagnose decay, periodontal and apical abscesses, sensitive fractured teeth, periodontal disease, etc. We see the patient even more frequently than the dentist. Some of my periodontal patients are seen every 3 months. It's good to catch oral health problems early so the patients operative work isn't so intensive and expensive. It helps to maintain a healthy dentition, and as we know this is related to our overall health and longevity.

Many elderly in nursing homes and senior housing need this care. Many are immobile and unable to come into the clinic. Also, for my handicapped patients who are not elderly that are wheelchair bound i.e. spina bifida, etc. They would love it if we could come into the home with our equipment. The winters are so hard and this would make it easier and so convenient for them.

Please consider passing Senate Bill 68 to help improve the high quality of dental hygiene for our patients in the state of Alaska.

Sincerely,

Susan R Hoover RDH, BS
3065 Forrest Drive Fairbanks, AK 99609
(907)388-4404

The Honorable Cathy Giessel, Senate President
State Capitol
120 4th Street, Rm 3
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Re: Support for Senate Bill 68- Dental Hygienist Advanced Practice Permit

Dear Senator Giessel,

This letter is to express my support for SB-68 for an advanced practice permit for dental hygienists. As a former dental director of a federally qualified health center (FQHC) I have seen the devastating effects that dental disease (caries, periodontal issues, tooth loss, etc) has on the underserved population (e.g., children with special needs or our geriatric population in long term care facilities).

Caries and periodontal disease are common problems found in the special need population (disabled adults, children, etc) and adults in long-term care settings. There simply is not enough access to serve these at risk populations. SB 68 would allow a dental hygienist to go to these facilities to perform cleanings, apply and/or prescribe fluoride, or use silver diamine fluoride to arrest caries. The treatment provided would not only have a positive impact on dental health but also on overall health. Better health results in lower health care costs overall so SB 68 can be a feasible cost effective option.

Access to care unfortunately is a national problem but even worse in Alaska due to the vastness of our state. SB 68 would help address the access to care issue by allowing a hygienist to see and treat the at risk populations. Many states have adopted direct access by allowing dental hygienists to practice in alternative settings.

Thank you for introducing SB 68, I support passage of this legislation.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Kilgore, DMD

4-3-19

There is great need for oral health services in Alaska. According to Oral Health America's "A State of Decay" report on the challenges of accessing oral health care for older adults (Vol. IV, 2018), Alaska ranked 30th among all 50 states. The report highlighted 31.2 percent of seniors aged 65 or older have severe tooth loss. Additionally, the PEW Center on the States' report "The Cost of Delay" (2010) found 26.2 percent of third graders had untreated cavities.

Please support access to oral health care in Alaska by passing SB 68. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

NAME Neil Minkin, RDH

ADDRESS. 7060 Miranda Dr. Anchorage, AK 99507

PHONE 907-317-5927

EMAIL minkster327@yahoo.com

Doreen K. Naughton, RDH, BSDH
Dental Hygiene Health Services
POB 968
Seahurst, WA 98062
206-241-2023
rdhdoreen@aol.com

This testimony is submitted in support of SB 68. The proposed changes to the Alaska Dental Hygienists' practice act will establish an advanced practice permit and eliminate an unnecessary collaborative agreement. SB 68 will allow licensed dental hygienists in Alaska to provide direct access to dental hygiene services for specifically defined populations in non-dental office settings.

I have been licensed in dental hygiene in Washington State since 1980. For over thirty years I have owned and operated Dental Hygiene Health Services as a sole proprietor. Dental hygienists in Washington State have provided dental hygiene services without the supervision of a dentist in settings such as nursing homes, hospitals, group homes serving the elderly and disabled, home health care agencies, public health clinics and schools since 1984 (See RCW 18.29.056) and in senior centers since 2007(See RCW 18.29.230).

Dental Hygiene Health Services has provided on-site care for elderly or disabled adults who reside in long term care facilities in the greater Seattle area. Over the years, I have cared for thousands of chronically and terminally ill people. Each of these clients benefit from dental hygiene services not only from the physical need for oral infection control, but from the social and nutritional concerns in being able to eat, drink, and smile without the pain and discomfort poor oral care can cause. As our immune system declines, the potential for opportunistic oral infection increases. These infections can be greatly controlled through daily and professional oral hygiene care. Good oral hygiene also reduces the risk of heart disease, stroke and aspiration pneumonia which threaten older populations. It is also important that a dental hygienist be available to instruct other health providers to properly care for their clients' mouths and teeth in order to maintain the best oral health and comfort possible in the later years of life.

As a practicing dental hygienist, I am liable for the services I provide and have professional malpractice insurance. It is my responsibility to provide preventive and therapeutic dental hygiene services in the community settings. I consult with physicians and nurse practitioners to determine my clients' ability to withstand treatment, to discuss need for pre medications, or any modifications to safely deliver dental hygiene services. Following dental hygiene assessment and treatment, a referral to a licensed dentist for a dental evaluation and any necessary dental treatment is routine. Additionally, referrals to physicians, dietitians, and other health care providers are made when needed.

Providing dental hygiene services, without the presence, or required collaboration agreement of a dentist has proven to be safe, convenient, and cost effective for my clients, their families, facilities and referral dentists. A large number of the clients served are recipients of Medicaid benefits. This number, especially for our elderly population, continues to rise as their personal resources dwindle. Given the growth in numbers of

elderly clients and the increase in retention of natural teeth, it is critical that dental hygienists participate in advanced practice roles to meet oral health needs in convenient community settings.

Limiting dental hygienists in the delivery of services because of supervision requirements is unnecessary. Allowing a dental hygienist to provide services prior to the diagnosis and treatment planning of a dentist do not compromise the health and safety, or the quality of service provided for clients. Clients now receive preventive services on a more frequent, expedient and cost-effective basis.

Finally, I encourage support of the proposed dental hygiene practice act changes in Alaska because it will increase opportunities for access to all oral care services. Direct access care provided by dental hygienist creates an alternate entry point to all dental services. Citizens in Alaska should support the efforts to make cost-effective, preventive dental hygiene services more available to them.

Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions or concerns that I have not addressed.

4-3-19

Dear Senator Giessel,

As your constituent, and a licensed dental hygienist in the state of Alaska, I want you to know that I support SB 68. This legislation will improve the public's access to oral health care by allowing licensed dental hygienists to provide care under an advanced practice permit after completing 4000 clinical hours.

As a dental hygienist serving the people of Alaska since 2007, I have personally seen the need to increase oral health care in our state. I worked in a busy pediatric practice, (recently), for 5.5 years and saw many cases of full mouth decay (cavities), that would bring tears to your eyes. Many children miss valuable days in school due to tooth pain. Children with poor oral health not only suffer from physical pain, but also emotional stress due to a lowered self confidence. Our goal is to help improve oral health in areas that are underserved in our great state.

There is great need for oral health services in Alaska. According to Oral Health America's, "A State of Decay" report on the challenges of accessing oral health care for older adults (Vol. IV, 2018), Alaska ranked 30th among all 50 states. The report highlighted 31.2 percent of seniors aged 65 or older have severe tooth loss. Additionally, the PEW Center on the States' report "The Cost of Delay" (2010) found 26.2 percent of third graders had untreated cavities.

We ask you to please support access to oral health care in Alaska by passing SB 68. Thank you for your time, consideration, and dedication to advancing oral health care in Alaska to so many people who desperately need it.

Kind Regards,

Shellea Trammell, RDH
PO Box 90075
Anchorage, AK. 99509
(907) 953-0012
Shellea7@outlook.com

April 4, 2019

Dear Senator Giessel,

As your constituent and an upcoming licensed dental hygienist in the state (as of August 2019), I want you to know that I support SB 68. This legislation will improve the public's access to oral health care by allowing licensed dental hygienists to provide care under an advanced practice permit after completing 4000 clinical hours.

As a dental assistant, soon to be dental hygienist, and advocate for dental public health through my children book, I have personally seen the need to increase access to oral health care in our state. Good oral health for life starts with our children. Without access to care these children can suffer physical pain, emotional stress, and low self-confidence due to poor oral health alone. I have a burning desire to change this, so these kids can have a life full good health and a bright smile. passing this bill would greatly help we and other hygienists to accomplish that. The PEW Center on the States' report "The Cost of Delay" (2010) found 26.2 percent of third graders had untreated cavities.

Please support access to oral health care in Alaska by passing SB 68. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Willow-Haven Walaszek

PO Box 1173

Soldotna AK 99669

(907) 690-2182

March 3, 2019

Senator Cathy Giessel
Senate President
State Capitol, Room 111
Juneau, AK 99801

Subject: Letter of support for SB 68 providing for an advanced practice permit for dental hygienists

Dear Senator Giessel:

This letter is to express my support for the provisions in SB 68 for an advanced practice permit for dental hygienists. The bill notes this permit is for experienced dental hygienists with the minimum of 4,000 documented hours of clinical service. In my time as dental officer in the Alaska Division of Public Health, I was aware this approach had been used in a number of states to address dental access issues with dental underserved populations (e.g., children with special health care needs and adults in long-term care settings) or underserved settings (e.g., schools with a high percentage of children from low-income families).

The practice model is useful in development of school sealant programs – programs that go into schools with fifty percent or more of children eligible for the free and reduced school lunch program to seal permanent first molars – the permanent teeth most likely to experience dental decay. This approach is an evidence based dental practice and using the approach with dental hygienists doing the sealants is a cost-effective way to implement these programs. This practice model could also have lowered costs for the dental screenings the Oral Health Program conducted in elementary schools in 2004, 2007/2008 and 2010/2011.

Adults in long-term care settings are at increased risk of dental decay both due to functional ability to maintain dental hygiene and medications or cancer treatment that can result in “dry mouth.” Older adults in long term care settings that have active dental decay are at higher risk for aspiration pneumonia. Dental pain in adults that are no longer verbal can express in behavioral problems. Periodontal disease may exacerbate chronic disease conditions including diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Yet these adults have little access to dental care. Having dental hygienists go into long-term care settings to clean teeth, apply fluoride varnish, use of a caries-arresting agent (silver diamine fluoride) can assist maintaining oral health of older adults who otherwise may not have access to dental care. In doing this the dental hygienists can triage those that need to get dental services for emergent conditions (e.g., dental abscess).

This practice model may also assist Alaska’s smaller community health centers. Some of Alaska’s dental health centers are staffed with one dentist. In circumstances where the dentist leaves the dental hygienist is faced with stopping work. One of the Alaska health centers faced this situation and ultimately lost the dental hygienist. When the health center got a new dentist, staff had to start completely over with recruitment to get a dental hygienist to practice in this more remote location.

Other states, including California and Oregon, have found this dental hygienist approach a cost-effective means to address dental access for underserved populations. Thank you for introducing this bill - I support passage of this legislation.

Sincerely,



Brad Whistler, DMD
P.O. Box 32936
Juneau, AK 99803

4-3-19

Dear Senator Giessel,

As your constituent and a licensed dental hygienist in the state, I want you to know that I support SB 68. This legislation will improve the public's access to oral health care by allowing licensed dental hygienists to provide care under an advanced practice permit after completing 4000 clinical hours.

As a dental hygienist for 10 years, I have seen the need the for oral health improvement in our state. I have worked in schools, villages, and clinics all throughout southwest Alaska. I have seen children in pain with no dental access. They often miss days of school waiting for treatment. I would love to be able to help improve oral health for the underserved.

There is great need for oral health services in Alaska. According to Oral Health America's "A State of Decay" report on the challenges of accessing oral health care for older adults (Vol. IV, 2018), Alaska ranked 30th among all 50 states. The report highlighted 31.2 percent of seniors aged 65 or older have severe tooth loss. Additionally, the PEW Center on the States' report "The Cost of Delay" (2010) found 26.2 percent of third graders had untreated cavities.

Please support access to oral health care in Alaska by passing SB 68. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Cassie Williams, RDH, BS
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