

The Honorable Ivy Spohnholz
Alaska State House of
Representative
State Capitol
120 4th Street, Rm 3
Juneau, Alaska 99801
Representative.ivy.spohnholz@akleg.gov
CC: Bernice.nesbett@akleg.gov

Re: Support for HB 127- Dental Hygienist Advanced Practice Permit

Dear Representative Spohnholz,

This letter is to express my support for HB 127 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. HB 127 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 HB 127 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. HB 127 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 time and interest in HB 127, I support passage of this legislation.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Kilgore, DMD