

James R Arneson DDS, Inc.
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April 30, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

I have become aware of HB127 which adds an advanced practice permit classification for the experienced licensed dental hygienist in Alaska. As a dentist interested in public health I see opportunities for increased access to care with this bill.

The advanced practice permit licensee would need to maintain the high standards required of the dental profession. HB127 must have public safety and patient access to care as central themes in final form.

There are individuals with physical or mental barriers to the typical dental office setting. Residents of long term care facilities, disabled individuals and some in the geriatric community could benefit. Another advantage for challenged patients would be greater chances for referral to a dentist when remarkable issues are observed by the advanced hygiene provider.

As a practicing dentist I support the advanced practice permit for qualified Alaska licensed dental hygienists.

Respectfully,

James Arneson, DDS
Kodiak, Alaska



April 29, 2019

Representative Spohnholz
State Capitol
Room 421
Juneau, AK 99801

Representative Spohnholz:

The Alaska Dental Society supports HB127.

HB127 will allow dental hygienists to deliver hygienic services independently of dentists in underserved areas. Alaska, like all states, has chronic areas of underserved need and allowing hygienists to work independently will provide an additional mechanism to fill that need.

Currently across the state hygienists are restricted to working either directly with a dentist or through an overseeing mechanism known as a collaborative agreement. While these options are the preferred mechanism for delivering care in order to provide comprehensive dental treatment for patients this is not always possible and allowing qualified hygienists to deliver care independently allows patients to at least receive hygiene services.

The Alaska Dental Society does request, however, that wording be inserted, similar to AS08.36.315(12), to ensure records are properly maintained and available to patients if they seek care elsewhere.

Sincerely,

David Logan, DDS
Executive Director, Alaska Dental Society



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MICHAEL I. DUNLEAVY

Department of Commerce, Community,
and Economic Development

BOARD OF DENTAL EXAMINERS

P.O. Box 110806
Juneau, AK 99811-0806
Main: 907.465.2542
Toll free fax: 907.465.2974

April 20, 2019

To Whom It May Concern,

During our latest meeting on April 15th, the Alaska Board of Dental Examiners reviewed HB127 which was introduced by Representative Spohnholz on April 9th. The new bill would establish an advanced practice permit category for experienced Alaska licensed hygienists. After our review, it was apparent the board was generally in favor of the bill and appreciates that HB127 does not remove the option to work under a collaborative agreement available under 08.32.115, and looks to add the advanced practice permit category under its own section. Because of that, the suggested changes to 08.32.110(e)(2) are appropriate. During the board's discussion, however, a couple of concerns surfaced and we offer two suggestions for consideration.

First, on line 22 of the bill or 08.32.125(a)(11), the board suggests adding "if certified by the board" after administration of local anesthetic. This would ensure an advanced practice permit holder would not perform a procedure they are not certified to do. The board realizes it would be extremely unusual for a licensed hygienist applying for this type of permit to not have a local anesthetic permit as well, but it is possible.

Secondly, because a dentist may be disciplined for failure to create and maintain patient or facility records under 08.36.315(12), a hygienist working independently with an advanced practice permit should have a similar record keeping requirement written into 08.32.125. Along those same lines, if an advanced practice hygienist employs an assistant, a provision similar to 08.36.315(10) should be introduced in the event an employee assistant is found to be performing procedures in violation of 08.36.346. In other words, along with independent practice, come grounds for discipline for certain violations that would have otherwise been covered under an employer dentist's license or not currently covered under 08.32.160.

All in all, the Alaska State Board of Dental Examiners remains in full support of adding an advanced practice permit for licensed hygienists and are only trying to proactively make suggestions that may help clarify issues if they arise. The Dental Board is happy to provide input during the process as needed.

Sincerely,


David Nielson, DDS
President, State of Alaska Board of Dental Examiners

April 20, 2019

The Honorable Ivy Spohnholz
Alaska State House of Representatives
State Capitol
120 4th Street, Room 3
Juneau, AK 99801

Subject: Letter of support for HB 127 providing for an advanced practice permit for dental hygienists

Dear Representative Spohnholz:

This letter is to express my support for the provisions in HB 127 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

Bernice Nisbett

From: L Bryant <lbryant_rdh@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, April 19, 2019 9:10 AM
To: Rep. Ivy Spohnholz
Cc: Bernice Nisbett
Subject: Please Support HB127

Subject: Support for HB127

To The Honorable Ivy Spohnholz

Alaska State House of Representatives:

As your constituent and a licensed public health minded dental hygienist in Alaska, I want you to know that I support HB127 and would appreciate your support of this important House Bill as well.

HB127 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 have worked for Southcentral Foundation (SCF) for nearly six years. I have personally seen the challenges presented daily from people not having access to care with children, elderly, adults, and special needs populations that come to the SCF Dental clinics 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 dental care and education 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 HB127. Thank you for your consideration and support for oral health in Alaska

Sincerely,

Lisa Bryant, RDH, BSDH

4730 S. Crabapple Ct.

Palmer, AK 99645

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

lbryant_rdh@yahoo.com

Bernice Nisbett

From: curtis dmd <curtis dmd@evfdental.com>
Sent: Monday, April 15, 2019 10:02 AM
To: Rep. Ivy Spohnholz
Cc: Bernice Nisbett
Subject: HB127

Rep. Spohnholz,

I am writing today to provide my support for HB 127. The use of Dental Hygienists with Advanced Practice Permits would provide a vulnerable group, those who are limited due to "age, infirmity, or disability", with real access to care. Many in this population no longer receive treatment because transportation becomes too great of an obstacle. Only when emergent issues arise will they be taken to an Urgent care or Dental Clinic. Preventative care, at their residence, could alleviate that concern. This is not a bill that has a Hygienist practicing outside their scope of practice. They are still maintaining to their professional code and are referring back to Dental specialists for Comprehensive needs.

It's a very good, viable solution to a very real problem. I encourage you to support this bill.

Sincerely,
Caroline Curtis, DMD
Eagle View Family Dental
907-694-5207

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Bernice Nisbett

From: Mary Cerney <marycerney@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, April 14, 2019 12:17 PM
To: Rep. Ivy Spohnholz
Cc: Bernice Nisbett
Subject: HB 127

Sent from my iPad

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

On Wed, Mar 6, 2019 at 8:03 AM Mary Cerney <marycerney@gmail.com> wrote:

Sent a letter to Senator Giessel and Jane Conway. Forwarded it to Yuri. just cant get it to you now as my computer skills are lacking and have to run to work. Will try tonight Thanks all for your tremendous work! Mary

--

Katrina Virgin, RDH, MS

~Live, Learn, & Elevate

AK#118822 CA#23476

President Alaska Dental Hygienists' Association

Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi

Associate Fellow World Clinical Laser Institute

(907) 671-3451

<http://alaskadha.org/>



Alaska

Dental Hygienists' Association

April 10, 2019

The Honorable Ivy Spohnholz
State Capitol
120 4th Street, Rm. 3
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Re: Support for House Bill 127 – Dental Hygienist Advanced Practice Permits

Dear Representative Spohnholz,

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 HB127. This legislation would make great improvements in access to oral health care by establishing an advanced practice permit for dental hygienists.

HB127 would allow dental hygienists who have practiced under supervision of a dentist for a minimum of 4,000 hours to practice under an advanced practice permit and eliminate the requirement 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 and 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.



Alaska

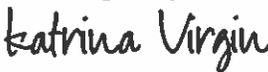
Dental Hygienists' Association

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 the requirement for 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 HB127, 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:

1F1F92F8C324457...

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>



April 9, 2019

Dear Representative Spohnholz,

I am a Dental Hygienist writing in support of HB 127 which may be heard in the Senate Labor and Commerce Committee in the next couple of weeks. I have been in Alaska for 35 years and worked in clinical practice, public health and as an educator. Collaborative Practice in Alaska, which I currently practice under at a long-term care facility, allows a hygienist to practice independently under the general supervision of a dentist. HB 127 -Advanced Practice Permit will expand access to dental care by allowing hygienists to work independently without having to obtain a collaborative practice agreement with a dentist to provide services, be able to bill for services provided, and refer to a dentist when needed.

Collaborative practice has improved access to care. However, many hygienists who want to work in underserved areas cannot find a Dentist who will work in a collaborative agreement. New ways of bringing oral health care to underserved populations are needed and why I am seeking your support and approval for HB 127-Advanced Practice permit.

HB 127 seeks to improve access to care by allowing a licensed dental hygienist, who holds an Advanced Practice Permit, to provide services to a patient who is unable to receive dental treatment because of age, infirmity, or disability without the physical presence, authorization, or supervision of a licensed dentist. HB 127 would allow dental hygienists to provide care to populations with special needs: children and adolescents, medically compromised individuals, the geriatric population and populations in underserved areas of Alaska. Licensed dental hygienists with an Advanced Practice Permit would still provide treatment as a member of a comprehensive oral health care team. This legislation would also allow an opportunity to revise efficiency and cost-saving methods to serve the underserved populations.

Please feel free to contact me personally if you would like more information or have any questions. Thank you for reviewing HB 127 and considering approval. HB 127 will improve access to the underserved thereby improving oral health, which has been shown to enhance overall health and well-being.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Royann Royer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Royann" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Royer".

Royann Royer CDA RDH LMPH
Director of Healthy Smiles Forever
907-227-8157 – cell phone

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

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

Re: HB127- Dental Hygienist Advanced Practice Permit

Representative Spohnholz,

My name is Melissa Davis. I am a registered dental hygienist in Fairbanks and have worked at a FQHC for 10 years. Working in community dental health spotlights the lack of care many Alaskans feel. Dental disease rampant in our communities. I am writing in support of HB 127. HB127 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. HB127 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 HB127 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