



Representative Ivy Spohnholz

House Ways and Means Committee Chair

House Labor & Commerce Committee Co-Chair

Serving House District 16: College Gate, Russian Jack, Nunaka Valley, & Reflection Lake

Sponsor Statement

HB 111 Version A: Dental Hygienist Advanced Practice Permit

“An Act relating to the practice of dental hygiene; relating to advanced practice permits for dental hygienists; relating to dental assistants; prohibiting unfair discrimination under group health insurance against a dental hygienist who holds an advanced practice permit; relating to medical assistance for dental hygiene services; and providing for an effective date.”

Oral health plays a crucial role in the overall health and wellbeing of Alaskans. Barriers to accessing dental care in Alaska have created enormous need in communities that are underserved by traditional system of care. Dental diseases disproportionately affect our state’s most vulnerable populations, including residents of rural areas where access to treatment is limited, and those who have limited mobility. We need all dental health care providers be able to work independently to ensure best possible oral outreach.

HB 111 will establish an Advanced Practice Permit for experienced, Alaska-licensed dental hygienists. This will allow dental hygienists who meet the necessary advanced education, experience, and licensure requirements of the permit to work independently via direct care agreement with a dentist, similar to those used by PA’s in partnerships with physicians, within the full scope of their training in underserved populations across a variety of institutional and organizational settings, including nursing homes, schools, hospitals, correctional facilities, and clinics. Dental hygienists are skilled, licensed oral health care professionals who focus on preventing and treating oral diseases.

The creation of Advanced Practice Permits will also increase access to oral care for individuals who need care but are not able to visit a dental office because of illness or disability. Additionally, it will offer new consumer choices for services and improve public education regarding dental hygiene and its connection to oral and overall health. Additionally, licensed dental hygienists will identify more acute dental issues early on and provide referrals for patients in need of restorative treatment.

HB 111 removes barriers to dental care by allowing qualified, licensed dental hygienists to practice to the full extent of their professional training, experience, and outreach to help promote and restore oral health to Alaska’s underserved communities.

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