



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 I: 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 health and wellbeing of Alaskans. Barriers to accessing dental care in Alaska have created enormous need in communities that are underserved by traditional care. Dental diseases disproportionately affect our state’s most vulnerable populations, including individuals with limited mobility and residents of rural areas where access to treatment is limited. To address this challenge, Alaska needs all dental health care providers be able to practice independently to the full scope of their training. Dental hygienists are skilled, licensed oral health care professionals who focus on preventing and treating oral disease.

HB 111 will establish an Advanced Practice Permit for experienced, Alaska-licensed dental hygienists. Dental hygienists with the necessary education, 4,000 hours of clinical experience, and successful licensure examination will be able to practice independently within the scope of their training to serve underserved populations across a variety of institutional and organizational settings, including nursing homes, schools, hospitals, correctional facilities, and clinics.

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 physical limitations. Additionally, it will offer a new consumer choice for services and improve public education regarding dental hygiene and its connection to oral and overall health. Licensed dental hygienists may identify more acute dental issues early on for those currently underserved 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.

Staff Contact: Chelsea Ward-Waller (907) 465-2840.

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