

## Katie McCall

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**From:** Stoneking, Marge <mstoneking@aarp.org>  
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**To:** Senate Labor and Commerce  
**Subject:** HB111 written testimony of support

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Oral health conditions—like untreated cavities, gum disease, and tooth loss—are [not inevitable consequences of aging](#). Access to adequate dental care among older adults can prevent or delay these problems and may lead to overall improvements in health and well-being among seniors.

A robust body of literature—including a [seminal report](#) by the U.S. Surgeon General—finds a clear connection between oral health and physical health, including health conditions that are prevalent among older adults—like diabetes and heart disease. Yet, many older adults go without the care they need to maintain healthy teeth and gums.

It is essential to explore ways for all health professionals to provide services to the full extent of their current knowledge, training, experience, and skills. There are areas where provider shortages limit access to care and where new practitioner types can lead to better and more efficient delivery of care. HB111 would increase access to oral healthcare by allowing qualified, licensed dental hygienists to practice to the full extent of their professional training and experience.

Long-term care residents are among those with the poorest access to oral health care. On-site services to those residing in long-term care facilities such as the Healthy Smiles Forever program growing in Southcentral Alaska would be well-served by the additional workforce availability and scope of practice for Advanced Practice Dental Hygienists provided for in HB111.

**AARP Alaska supports HB111 to create the new permit category for oral health professionals of Advanced Practice Dental Hygienist to increase access to oral healthcare for older Alaskans.**

On behalf of the fastest growing senior population in the nation and our 77,000 AARP Alaska members, and for the benefit of all Alaskans, AARP Alaska thanks you for your leadership on this issue. We urge your support and action to move and pass HB111 Dental Hygienist Advanced Practice Permit.

Respectfully, Marge Stoneking  
Advocacy Director, AARP Alaska

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