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Testimony in Support of Senate Bill (SB) 635

Representative Mary Felzkowski

Senate Committee on Public Benefits, Licensing and State-Federal Relations

January 11, 2018

Good Afternoon members of the Senate Committee on Public Benefits, Licensing and State-Federal Relations, and thank you for this opportunity to testify in favor of Senate Bill (SB) 635.

Many medical professions employ several levels of providers in order to allow each to practice at their highest level of training. Examples of these include Advance Practice Nurses and Physician Assistants, among others. Our legislation will create a new provider level within the dentistry industry called Expanded Function Dental Auxiliaries (EFDAs).

Under the current dentistry profession in Wisconsin, the dentist is assisted by two other members of the care team, dental assistants and dental hygienists. Dental assistants are not licensed by the state and have a limited scope on the procedures they are able to perform. They are often certified by the Dental Assisting National Board, but this is not required. Hygienists have more training, often graduating from one of the many excellent programs run by our tech colleges, and are allowed to perform more procedures. They are licensed by, and have representation on, the Dentistry Examining Board.

Over twenty states, as well as the military, currently allow EFDAs as another kind of dental practitioner. EFDAs have training and education requirements, are licensed members of the dental team, and work under the supervision of the dentist. They can perform functions including completing restorations, taking impressions, and providing sealants. An EFDA can be incredibly useful in taking care of patients who are scheduled for standard visits and do not require intense or comprehensive care. In other states, it is common for assistants and hygienists to also become certified EFDAs, which can often be done at tech colleges with existing dental hygiene programs like those in Wisconsin.

EFDAs have proven to allow dental offices to be more efficient and to see more patients. Efficiency will be crucial as we work to improve access to oral health care for all Wisconsinites. While EFDAs are by no means the solution to the access issue, they are one piece in a series of actions that should be taken.

Thank you for your time, and I would be happy to answer any questions.



PATRICK TESTIN

STATE SENATOR

DATE: January 11, 2018
RE: Testimony on 2017 Senate Bill 635
TO: The Senate Committee on Public Benefits, Licensing, and State-Federal Relations
FROM: Senator Patrick Testin

Thanks to Chairman Kapenga and members of the committee for accepting my written testimony on Senate Bill 635 (SB 635), which paves the way for a new kind of dental practitioner in Wisconsin, the Expanded Function Dental Auxiliary (EFDA).

Our state currently recognizes dentists, dental assistants, and dental hygienists as dentistry practitioners. By creating a certification for EFDAs, Wisconsin would join twenty other states and the military who recognize the need for this type of professional, whose level of expertise would lie between assistants and hygienists. Under this bill, EFDAs would be able to provide the following types of care to patients:

- 1) placing and finishing restoration material after a dentist removes tooth decay;
- 2) applying sealants;
- 3) coronal polishing;
- 4) impressions;
- 5) temporizations;
- 6) packing cord;
- 7) removing cement from crowns;
- 8) adjusting dentures and other removable oral appliances;
- 9) removing sutures and dressings; and
- 10) applying topical fluoride, fluoride varnish, or similar dental topical agent.

This bill creates two different pathways for a dental assistant to become an EFDA. The applicant may either practice 1,000 hours and hold a certified dental assistant credential issued by the Dental Assisting National Board or practice 2,000 hours verified by a supervising licensed dentist. All applicants must demonstrate that they have completed at least 70 hours of classroom instruction for EFDAs, and must be proficient in CPR. An EFDA may only complete assigned dental procedures if the dentist who delegates these duties remains on the premises.

By enabling qualified EFDAs to perform standard functions in a supervised environment, we can alleviate some of the patient load currently born by dentists and dental hygienists, allowing these professionals to focus on more intense or specialized cases. This increased efficiency is especially important in more rural parts of the state where these professionals are in shorter supply.

I ask that you join me in supporting this bill.

WISCONSIN DENTAL HYGIENISTS' ASSOCIATION

January 11, 2018

TO: The Committee on Public Benefits, Licensing and State-Federal Relations – Senator Chris Kapenga, Chair.



FROM: The Wisconsin Dental Hygienists' Association – Board of Directors (WI-DHA BOD) – Jennifer Martinson – President

RE: Senate Bill 635 – Certification of Expanded Function Dental Auxiliaries (EFDAs) and Granting Rule-Making Authority

Thank you Chairman Kapenga and members of the Senate Public Benefits, licensing and State-Federal Relations committee for allowing the Wisconsin Dental Hygienists' Association (WI-DHA) to submit written testimony on Senate Bill 635 relating to Expanded Function Dental Auxiliaries (EFDA). Following an extensive review of the EFDA proposal and several negotiation sessions between leaders from the WI-DHA and the Wisconsin Dental Association (WDA), WI-DHA has agreed to support SB 635. Initially, we had concerns centered on certain specific dental procedures and some details about how the EFDA would be educated. Our concerns were raised in our meetings with WDA and addressed in an amendment which I believe is now, or will be available to this committee. This amendment has been accepted by WI-DHA.

WI-DHA views the EFDA proposal as a mechanism by which the practice of dentistry can be made more efficient and productive. Additionally, adding EFDAs to the dental team and official recognition of their credentials is a step forward for our dental assistant professional colleagues. The proposal is in keeping with the American Dental Hygienists' Association policy statements recognizing that all members of the dental team should be educated appropriately and according to a high standard and also that they should be regulated in order to assure patient safety and accountability to the public.

Given the short timeline between our most recent discussion with WDA and the public hearing, we believe a few clarifications to the existing amendment language might be in order and we will discuss those items with WDA following this hearing. Please be assured that our support for this amendment is not contingent on making these clarifications. Our discussions with WDA have resulted in greater understanding and agreement between our two organizations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'AKM, RDH, BS'.

Jennifer Martinson, RDH – WI-DHA President