



NANCY VANDERMEER

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 70TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

TO: Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Health

FROM: State Representative Nancy VanderMeer

DATE: December 7th, 2023

SUBJECT: Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 692

Thank you Chairperson Cabral-Guevara for holding a hearing on SB 692 today and thank you to members of the Committee on Health for being here. As many of you are aware, interstate compacts allow states to coordinate across state lines and create agreements to implement standards for licensing of specific professions. Wisconsin has recently enacted legislation allowing our state to participate in a number of interstate compacts including the Physical Therapy Compact, the Occupational Therapy Compact, the Enhanced Nurse Licensing Compact (eNLC), and others. Recently, we voted to ratify the Physician Assistant Compact and that bill was signed by the governor yesterday.

Senate Bill 692, which ratifies the Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact in our state, is not notably different from a number of compacts that this committee and this body has worked with, passed, and enacted in the past few years. In the Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact, a professional in Wisconsin wishing to obtain an *optional* compact license would apply to receive the license and then, if issued, be able to receive a privilege to practice in other compact states. The inverse would be true for compact licensees from other states wishing to practice in our state. This will help Dentists and Dental Hygienists in a variety of ways, including the ability to diagnose and treat patients more rapidly and aid in mobility for professionals looking to relocate to Wisconsin and begin practicing. These licensure compacts have also proven to be of tremendous value for military members and their spouses, either while enrolled in service or leaving, as they are more mobile, by and large, than the general population. This particular compact actually originated out of a Department of Defense (DOD) initiative, which I believe you'll be able to hear more about today from some of the professionals here to testify in support of the compact.

Additionally, so you're aware, earlier this year the Council of State Governments (CSG) provided states with model compact language designed for dentists and dental hygienists. The language development was a joint effort between CSG, the American Dental Association, and the American Dental Hygienists' Association, with a number of states' dental examining boards contributing expertise. For the compact to take effect, seven states will need to formally adopt the language. So far three states have enacted legislation (Iowa, Washington and Tennessee),



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while a handful of other states have bills pending, including Minnesota. Passage of this legislation would allow Dentists and Dental Hygienists in Wisconsin to help steer the initial creation and oversight of the compact commission.

I think that one of the best things we can do as a legislative body is to remove barriers to care by allowing and encouraging health care professionals to provide care where it's needed. This compact, and others like it, remove barriers to care by allowing and encouraging health care professionals to provide care where it's needed while at the same time preserving our state's high standards pertaining to licensing, regulation, professionalism, and quality of care. Again, thank you for the opportunity to be here today, the opportunity for a public hearing on this legislation, and the chance to move this bill forward in the process. Thank you to the committee members that already registered their support by co-sponsoring this bill, and I respectfully ask that you join me and the Wisconsin Dental Association, the Wisconsin Dental Hygienists' Association, and others, in supporting this proposal.



STATE SENATOR

Eric Wimberger

DISTRICT 30

**State Senator Eric Wimberger
Testimony before the Senate Committee on Health
Re: ratification of the Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact.**

Thank you Senator Cabral-Guevara and committee members for holding a hearing today on Senate Bill 692. This legislation establishes a pathway for Dentists and Dental Hygienists to practice in other compact states, or allow Dentists and Dental Hygienists from other compact states to provide care in Wisconsin.

Interstate compacts allow states to coordinate across state lines and create agreements to implement standards for licensing of specific professions. These compacts increase access to care for patients, enhance mobility for providers, and create standardized credentials among participating states.

Over the last few sessions, Wisconsin has implemented numerous interstate compacts for Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, and Nurses. This legislation ensures that eligible Dentists and Dental Hygienists in Wisconsin will only have to complete a single application to receive licenses from each compact state in which they intend to practice. Additionally, licensed Dentists and Dental Hygienists from other participating states will have streamlined access to a Wisconsin license. This will help Dentists and Dental Hygienists in a variety of ways, including the ability to diagnose and treat patients more rapidly and aid in mobility for professionals looking to relocate to Wisconsin and begin practicing.

This legislation is the result of a joint effort between the Council of State Governments, the American Dental Association, and the American Dental Hygienists' Association, and a number of states' dental examining boards. I want to thank all of the groups for their hard work and cooperation on getting this bill together.

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To: Senate Committee on Health
From: Matt Crespin, MPH, RDH, Executive Director, Children's Health Alliance of Wisconsin
Date: December 7, 2023
Re: Support for SB 692 – ratification of the Dental and Dental Hygienist Compact.

Good morning Chair Cabral-Guevara and members of the committee. My name is Matt Crespin and I serve as the executive director at Children's Health Alliance of Wisconsin (Alliance). Thank you for the opportunity to share with you remarks in support of Senate Bill 692. I have had the distinct pleasure and honor of working on the development of the Dental and Dental Hygienist (DDH) Compact for more than 5 years. In 2019, I was elected to serve as the president of the American Dental Hygienists' Association (ADHA). It was during this time the ADHA and the American Dental Association (ADA) collaborated to embark on the development of this compact with the support of the Council on State Governments (CSG) through funding from the Department of Defense. For the past several years I've served on both the technical advisory group and the document writing team for model legislation developed by CSG and many partners. I'm excited the compact has been enacted in Iowa, Tennessee and Washington and is working its way through a handful of other state legislatures including our own. More information about the compact can be found at www.ddhcompact.org including an excellent FAQ and myths vs facts sections.

The Alliance is a statewide organization, affiliated with Children's Wisconsin, focused on raising awareness, mobilizing leaders, impacting public health and implementing programs proven to work. The Alliance has six key initiatives including environmental health, emergency care, medical home, injury prevention, grief and bereavement and oral health. It is not uncommon for our organization to get a call from a dental provider that has moved here and is struggling with the portability of their license from one state or another. There are often unnecessary delays, added expenses and regulatory hurdles that dentists and dental hygienists face when simply trying to practice over state lines. Our statewide oral health coalition is focused on removing barriers such as these and is one of the reasons we support the implementation of the DDH Compact in Wisconsin.

This work originated by the Department of Defense because of issues they experienced with getting military spouses licensed as military members moved from state to state. According to the United States Department of Defense, more than 20% of military spouses are unemployed and 36% require an occupational license of some form to be employed. There have been efforts to address this issue for military spouses in our state and others, however these professionals want to gain credentials equal to their peers. In some cases employers do not view the credential given to a military spouse in the same light as those provided to occupational license holders who go through the more traditional licensing process. The DDH compact would eliminate this issue completely along with removing barriers for all occupational license holders in dentistry and dental hygiene who move to and from states that adopt this compact. The American Dental Association reports that 14% of dentists who have been practicing less than 10 years moved to a new state between 2019 and 2021. Additionally, this will address issues for providers who may live in one state and work in several others by reducing the burden of maintaining multiple licenses to do the exact same thing from one state to another.

This collaborative effort between the ADHA, ADA, CSG and DOD is an opportunity to break down regulatory barriers and continue to ensure we keep the public safe. This effort will allow for the portability of dental and dental hygiene licenses from one state to another and allow providers to get to work faster and without unnecessary hurdles in their way. All providers that utilize the compact are required to graduate from a dental

or dental hygiene school accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA), pass national board exams and complete a clinical assessment. Providers are also required successfully complete the state jurisprudence exam and follow all applicable state laws for practicing dentistry and dental hygiene. The Wisconsin Dentistry Examining board will also remain the authority in overseeing those providers granted a privilege to practice in Wisconsin using the DDH Compact.

The DDH compact will create a more seamless method of portability for licenses and similar compacts exist in nearly 10 other health professions and Wisconsin participates in a vast majority of them. I appreciate your time and attention to this important issue and look forward to seeing Wisconsin on the list of states who have adopted the DDH compact.

Respectfully submitted: Matt Crespin, MPH, RDH, Executive Director, Children's Health Alliance of Wisconsin, mcrespin@chw.org, (414) 337-4562.

SB 692 – Ratification of the Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact

Chair Cabral-Guevara and members of the Committee,

My name is Jennifer Lehto, I am the Immediate Past President of WI-DHA. I am a Registered Dental Hygienist and Certified Dental Assistant. I work at Chippewa Valley Technical College (CVTC) as a dental assisting instructor, dental hygiene instructor, and a clinical hygienist. I am testifying in support of this bill.

I am not representing CVTC but as an educator and a hygienist, I understand the importance of an Interstate Licensure Compact for my students and my colleagues. We have no crystal ball to predict where our future paths may lead us. We can try to plan as much as possible but there are always unpredictable variables. Ourselves or our spouses may be active military members that may receive orders of relocation. We may find ourselves in the position to expand employment opportunities in another state that would benefit ourselves and/or our families. We may have residents from other states that want to come to Wisconsin to have a broaden their scope of practice and increase practice settings options. We may retire, move states, and then decide we want casual employment, or to volunteer our time. There are unlimited scenarios.

Right now, there is an incredible burden to gain or maintain multiple state licenses. Burdens aren't just financial but can include delays in employment or in some cases needing to take or retake national or regional boards. We all receive Commission on Dental Accreditation education from institutions, we are all required to pass National Board Dental Hygiene Examination, and a regional clinical board like CRDTS. My colleagues and my own education, knowledge, experience, competence, and skills don't change or diminish because of a geographic location change.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this important matter.

Jennifer Lehto, BSDH, RDH, CDA
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Testimony in SUPPORT of SB-692: Ratification of the Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact

Good morning, Senators and Representatives:

My name is Robin Hemerley, I am the current president of the Wisconsin Dental Hygienists' Association. On behalf of WI-DHA, I would like to testify in **support** of the Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact. The compact will create reciprocity among participant states and reduce the barriers to license portability for dental professionals by easing the delay, complications, and expenses of becoming licensed to practice in another state. This increased collaborative effort among states can also promote workforce development and strengthen Wisconsin's labor market by facilitating multistate practice.

We sincerely appreciate the opportunity to testify at this hearing and are grateful for the time and commitment that has been spent on the dentist and dental hygienist compact.

Respectfully submitted:

Robin Hemerley, BSDH, RDH
WI-DHA President
(608) 479-1593
widhapresident@gmail.com

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'RHemerley', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Submitted on behalf of the Wisconsin Dental Hygienists' Association

Memo

TO	Chair Cabral-Guevara and Members of the Senate Committee on Health
FROM	Doug Ballweg, President & CEO, Delta Dental of Wisconsin
DATE	December 7, 2023
RE	Support of Senate Bills 689 (Licensure of Dental Therapists), 692 (Dentist/Dental Hygienist Compact), and 706 (Marquette Dentistry Scholarships)

Thank you, Chairwoman Cabral-Guebara, and members of the Senate Committee on Health, for taking time to consider these important bills on oral health access. Delta Dental believes that together the bills are helpful building blocks that will continue moving Wisconsin forward toward better access to oral health care, especially in our rural areas.

Delta Dental continues to work as a partner with the State of Wisconsin in providing support to both dental patients and professionals in an effort to improve oral health care for all Wisconsinites. Through a partnership with Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Delta Dental of Wisconsin and the Delta Dental of Wisconsin Foundation have contributed more than \$5 million to the Seal-a-Smile program. Each year the program provides oral health screenings, fluoride varnish, and sealants when necessary to elementary students across Wisconsin, at no cost to participants. Typically, 70,000 students participate with nearly half receiving dental sealants.

Delta Dental also realizes the importance of supporting providers who choose to work in underserved areas. Delta Dental currently does this through a fellowship program where our Foundation provides funding for up to three recent Marquette University School of Dentistry graduates to participate in an advanced general dentistry training program that focuses on the needs of low-income patients in rural areas. To complement this fellowship program, the Delta Dental Foundation established a Service Loan Repayment Program, which provides financial assistance of up to \$100,000 in loan repayments for dentists who commit to providing dental care in designated underserved geographical areas. We believe SB 706, which would fund scholarships for Marquette dental students who commit to practicing in these same areas, is highly complementary to these efforts and we urge passage.

Memo

Delta Dental has long been a proponent of licensing dental therapists in Wisconsin, and we laud the work Senator Felzkowski and others have done to move the policy this far. Our message on dental therapy has been consistent in that it is one necessary piece to a broader set of reforms. It can help reduce costs, provide greater access to care by allowing for another pathway toward becoming a dental professional in Wisconsin and it can also facilitate the expansion of dentist supervised services into additional settings, such as nursing homes, veteran facilities, schools, hospitals, mobile clinics, and satellite dental clinics. Community clinics and Federally Qualified Health Centers are too valuable an asset to the citizens of Wisconsin to continue to put them at risk. Long-term solutions like employing dental therapists are needed to address the workforce and reimbursement issues they face. We urge passage of SB 689.

Access to dental care is a serious issue for the state's underinsured or uninsured, but it is also becoming an issue for those with insurance in places where access to dental professionals is limited. Ratification of the Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact is another way to expand our pool of oral health professionals able to work in Wisconsin. Encouraging a system that allows for portability of licenses from other states while still maintaining Wisconsin's high standards is a small but important step we can take to increase access.

Thank you again for your attention to this important matter. We encourage the Senate Committee on Health to support SB 689, SB 692, and SB 706.

Sincerely,



Doug Ballweg
President/CEO
Delta Dental of Wisconsin