



November 7, 2010

Subject: Special Committee on Health Care Access

To: The Honorable Fred Kessler, Chair and The Honorable Luther Olsen, Vice-Chair

From: Deborah Schumacher RDH, ME
WDHA-Legislative Chair

Your committee's charge is directed to study possible state assistance to underserved areas and an expansion of Wisconsin's capacity for training family practice physicians and nurses and additional funding sources for public health.

We request that you also consider dental hygienists as a viable avenue to expand workforce capacity, improve access to oral health services, and promote overall health.

In addition to our first request (sent on October 21, 2010-Recommendations 1 and 2 listed below), we are also submitting two additional requests for your consideration. Together these four requests will support: expanding current workforce capacity and assuring a future workforce to meet population needs within evolving delivery systems by developing a career ladder and improving the regulatory environment.

Recommendation #1: Implement Policy Changes to Better Utilize the Current Workforce

The goal of this proposal is to:

1. Align the definition of dental hygiene with ADA Commission on Dental Accreditation Standard 2-17.
2. Expand access to dental hygiene services by deleting a defined list of practice settings.
3. Remove authorization requirements that must be met before dental hygienists may serve people in certain settings.
4. Require documentation of referrals and consultations for patient conditions outside of the scope of dental hygiene.

Recommendation #2: The Wisconsin Idea: Build a Career Ladder to Maximize Academic Institutional Capacity

1. **By June 30, 2011**-Request articulation agreements between the eight existing Wisconsin Technical College System Dental Hygiene Programs and the Bachelor of Dental Therapy or Master of Dental Therapy at the University of Minnesota are developed.
http://www.dentistry.umn.edu/programs_admissions/DentalTherapyPrograms/home.html
2. **By June 30, 2011**-Allow dental hygienists who have received an Associate Degree in Dental Hygiene from the Wisconsin College or University and who obtain a Bachelor of Science degree in Dental Therapy or a Master of Science in Dental Therapy from the University of Minnesota to be eligible for the State Loan Repayment Program.

3. **By June 30, 2011**-Request that the Wisconsin Department of Regulation and Licensing and Wisconsin Department of Health Services in cooperation with Examining Boards to:
 - a. expand the scope of dental hygiene practice under 447.06 (3) (g) to accommodate advanced practice models,
 - b. certify dental hygienists who complete the University of Minnesota Bachelor of Science Dental Therapist practicing under standing orders of a dentist licensed in Wisconsin and,
 - c. certify a Master of Science in Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner to practice using a consultation and referral model.
4. **By June 30, 2012**-Request the University of Wisconsin develops a Bachelor of Science Degree program in dental therapy (Wisconsin model) with articulation agreements between the eight existing technical college programs.
5. **By June 30, 2013**-Request the University of Wisconsin System develop a Master of Science in advanced dental therapy (Wisconsin model).

Recommendation #3: Assure Dental Hygienists are reimbursed for all Medicaid-covered Services within the Scope of Practice:

This request includes: case management services, dental hygiene examinations (currently screening is covered, not examinations), and radiographs.

Recommendation #4: Establish a Dental Hygiene Examining Board.

The profession of dental hygiene is regulated by the Wisconsin Dentistry Examining Board (WDEB). The WDEB consists of 11 members; six dentists, three dental hygienists and 2 public members. There is the potential for conflict of interest when employers regulate employees. A recent report by the Institute of Medicine: *THE U.S. ORAL HEALTH WORKFORCE IN THE COMING DECADE* discusses regulatory challenges on pages 55-56. A copy of this report is included as an attachment.

A Dental Hygiene Examining Board would be funded by licensure fees.

I would like to sincerely thank you for considering our recommendations as you work to find solutions for the residents of Wisconsin.



Deborah Schumacher RDH, ME
WDHA Legislative Chair