

Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee
Testimony in Support of SB49: Pertaining to the Registered Dental Practitioner
By Janette Delinger, RDH, MSDH
Monday, February 23, 2015

Dear Chairwoman Pilcher-Cook and Committee Members,

I am a proponent for SB 49 and have been involved with this legislation for over 5 years. Thank you for allowing this discussion to take place. As a Registered Dental Hygienist (RDH), I have practiced clinical dental hygiene for over 24 years and am well aware of the access to care issue in Kansas. The access to care issue is a very serious concern for our unserved and underserved populations within the great state of Kansas.

The Registered Dental Practitioner (RDP) is a solution to provide preventive and basic restorative care to those in need. The education base of the RDP will start with a licensed registered dental hygienist with a minimum of 3 years, and often more, college education and can provide full preventive dental services to children and adults. Using the RDH as an entry level for the RDP allows for the educational piece to focus on basic restorative services, as described in the bill. The education is much less than a dentist because the scope of an RDP is specific to basic restorative care. No other education is necessary since they will not be doing major restorative procedures such as root canals, crowns, bridges, dentures, partials, etc. The bill already has safety concerns addressed such as working with a dentist for 500 hours after graduating and working under the general supervision of a dentist. This will not be an independent practitioner. The RDP will be part of the dental team that has outreach opportunities.

The fact of the matter is that there are very few dentists in the state of Kansas, approximately 25%, that take KanCare patients. The real question to ask is: Of those that accept patients on KanCare, how many are they seeing in their offices? The late Representative Bob Bethell mentioned he asked this question three times and never received an answer. Representative Bethell was a Champion of this bill because he knew that the RDP would provide preventive and basic dental care for these patients!!

The RDP is not a new concept as over 50 countries have had something similar for over 25 years with much success. Alaska and Minnesota have practicing mid-level dental providers and Maine just passed legislation year. Why are we waiting?? There is **NO** evidence to support anything other than safety and excellent care from mid-level dental providers that have made a difference for those in need. If you have questions based on information you have received from those that oppose this bill, the Kansas Dental Project will provide you with solid evidence that shows the benefit of these types of providers and the positivity of their outcomes.

Please consider the passage of this bill and give our underserved and unserved Kansans the opportunity to receive preventive and basic dental care from a licensed mid-level dental provider, the Registered Dental Practitioner.

Respectfully submitted,

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