



The Honorable Shane Pendergrass
Chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee
House Office Building, Room 241
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

February 18, 2020

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 749 – HEALTH OCCUPATIONS – DENTAL
HYGIENISTS – AUTHORITY TO PRESCRIBE AND ADMINISTER MEDICATION**

Dear Chair Pendergrass:

The Maryland Dental Hygienists Association (MDHA) is an organization seeking to improve the public's total health by advancing the art and science of dental hygiene, including ensuring access to quality oral health care, increasing awareness of the cost-effective benefits of preventative dental services, promoting the highest standards of dental hygiene education, licensure, practice and research, and representing and promoting the interests of dental hygienists in Maryland. In keeping with that mission, MDHA takes this opportunity to voice its strong support for House Bill 749, which authorizes a dental hygienist, who complies with specified requirements issued by the Board of Dental Examiners (the Board), to prescribe a limited formulary of medications and administer certain medication issued under a standing order of a licensed dentist.

In order to exercise the authority created by HB 749, a hygienist would have to complete any educational requirements established by the Board, similar to the regulatory structure developed previously for hygienists to administer nitrous oxide. HB 749 limits a qualifying hygienist's prescribing authority to (1) topical and systemic types of prescription or over-the-counter fluoride preparations, (2) topical antimicrobial oral rinses, and (3) ibuprofen not exceeding 600 mg every six hours for up to three days. Additionally, under HB 749, a qualifying hygienist may administer medications under a licensed dentist's standing order, assuming all requirements are met by both practitioners. This provision was added to the bill at the suggestion of the Maryland State Dental Association (MSDA).

The measured but important expansion of scope authorized under HB 749 will allow Maryland hygienists to practice more efficiently and effectively in both traditional dental offices and public health settings, and is a natural extension of their current preventative model of care. HB 749 will also put Maryland hygienists more in line with their counterparts in other states that allow similar, limited prescriptive authority.

MDHA takes this opportunity to thank Delegate Kipke for his support and leadership on this issue and to thank MSDA for working with us in the interim to develop legislation that both dentists and hygienists can support, and we look forward to continuing to work with MSDA, the Maryland Dental Action Coalition (MDAC), and the members of the House Health and Government Affairs Committee to develop and implement effective dental policy in Maryland. MDHA urges the Committee's favorable consideration of House Bill 749.