



## THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

### **Testimony in Support of HB 939 State Board of Dental Examiners – Practice of Dentistry - Revisions**

Good afternoon, Chairman Pendergrass, Vice Chairman Pena-Melnyk and honorable members of the committee. Thank you for this opportunity to present **HB 939 State Board of Dental Examiners – Practice of Dentistry – Revisions**. This bill represents a great deal of work and collaboration among the Board of Dental Examiners, the Maryland State Dental Association and the Association of Dental Support Organizations. Of course I also have to commend Delegate Ariana Kelly and Senator Chris West for their artful guidance in these deliberations. The discussions continued in the beginning of session so there were a few amendments in the Senate, and you have copies. We will simply be conforming to the third reading version of the bill, which passed in the Senate unanimously on February 13.

Over the past several years, this committee has wrestled with the definition of the “practice of dentistry” in a way that assures the highest level of dental care for our residents and at the same time making it more affordable and accessible. We have seen the growth of dental practices which hired dental service organizations to manage the office administration in order to allow more flexibility and opportunities for dentists. However, our current laws do not clearly delineate where the actual “practice of dentistry” ends and “office management” begins. That is the problem that this bill will solve.

Here is what the bill does in a nutshell:

- Defines a “Dental Professional Corporation” as an individual or group of licensed dentists
- Defines “Practice Dentistry” as diagnostic, clinical and therapeutic oral care
- Confirms that only a dentist or dental professional corporation can own a dental practice and defines the specific roles of the dentists in the practice
- Allows for a dental practice to enter into an agreement with an unlicensed person to own and manage the property for the practice, provide a wide range of administrative services that in no way overlap with the practice of dentistry
- Defines how compensation for the services can be negotiated
- Confirms that contracts may not include provisions prohibiting the dental owners from providing information to appropriate governmental agencies

Passage of this bill recognizes the changes in the delivery of dental services to meet changing needs in the ways that allows for the highest level of care for our residents, but allows provides greater opportunities for care and flexibility for our dental practitioners.

Thank you for your consideration of this opportunity to provide better resources to our residents in need. I respectfully request a favorable report for HB 939.