



Committee: Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

Bill Number: SB 808: Health Occupations – Licensed Dentists – Administration of Vaccines

Hearing Date: March 2, 2021

Position: Oppose

The Maryland Nurses Association (MNA) opposes *Senate Bill 808 – Licensed Dentists – Administration of Vaccines*. MNA believes that dentists have the education and training to administer vaccinations. There may be some circumstances, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic, where dentists can play an important public health role in making vaccinations more available. However, we are opposed to the bill for several reasons:

- Public health planning should guide decisions about expanding who administers vaccinations. We are aware of no state policy discussions about the role of dentists in vaccine administration beyond the pandemic; and
- There are many practical considerations about integrating vaccination administration into dental practices beyond the pandemic, including:
 - Storage and Potentially Wasted Vaccines: Vaccines must be stored in controlled environments (i.e. refrigerated at a certain temperature) and expire after a certain time period. Do dental offices have the storage for vaccines? And will dental offices have a sufficient volume of vaccine patients so that vaccines will not be wasted?
 - Syncing the timing of vaccinations with dental visits: Many vaccinations require multiple shots, and the follow-up shots must follow a certain schedule. It is unlikely that the booster shot schedule will align with regular dental visits. How will booster shots be coordinated?

Nurses support integrating somatic, behavioral health, and oral health care. Dentists are a critical part of the health care team. Expanding the role of dentists in vaccination administration is a worthwhile issue to explore. However, we cannot support this bill because there was no public health planning with other health care providers on the development of the bill. We ask for an unfavorable report. If we can provide any further information, please contact Suhani Chitalia at schitalia@policypartners.net