

February 25, 2021

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Dear Respected Members of the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee,

I am writing to urge you to reject SB 808. There are several problems I see with this bill.

I don't understand why dentists would support this bill in the first place. Certainly it will help them have another service to offer and charge insurance companies for, but in the long run it will certainly hurt their practices. Kids are already hesitant to visit the dentist. If you add getting a vaccine to the experience that very well might result in even more adults afraid of the dentist and just don't go.

But more importantly, this opens the door for families to stop taking their kids to the pediatrician. It's hard to get pre-teens and teens into wellness visits, however it's an incredibly important visit for them. Pediatricians do so much more than just administer vaccines at those appointments. They look for abuse and neglect. They are a safe place for kids to bring up issues like birth control needs, mental health issues, questions they might have about their sexuality. Many times these visits are done without the parents so kids have the space to ask questions of a medical professional they have grown up going to and trusting. If suddenly they don't have to go to the pediatrician to get their routine vaccine, many parents might just stop taking them to the pediatrician. Why go to two places if you can just go to one? Yes, I do understand that parents still need a prescription from the doctor to get the vaccine at the dentist. Can't you just see parents pressuring doctors into just writing a script though? What pediatrician is going to say, "Thanks for coming in for your well visit today. Here's a script for getting your vaccine at the dentist." It just doesn't make any sense.

What problem is this bill trying to address? Certainly it's not just dentists having suffered this year from reduced appointments and services due to Covid restrictions? So if it's to help families, it seems like it would actually harm them in the long run. If you wanted to allow dentists to administer vaccines why not change it to adults. That might actually make sense. Adults often rarely for yearly physicals but they are adults can do what they want. However, if they were able to go to a dentist and get their flu shot all in one visit that might help. Just keep the kids out of it. They need to go to their pediatricians.

Sincerely,

Annette Nelson