



The Honorable Shane Pendergrass
Chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee
House Office Building, Room 230
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

February 1, 2022

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 219 – DENTAL HYGIENISTS – CONSULTATION
REQUIREMENTS – HEALTH CARE PRACTITIONERS**

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 support for House Bill 219 which would increase the public health settings where dental hygienists are able to provide preventative and educational dental services.

In 2019, MDHA worked with Delegate Kipke, Delegate Kelly and the members of the Health and Government Operations Committee to successfully pass legislation to expand the public health settings where dental hygienists, under general supervision, can provide services to include nursing homes, assisted living programs, group homes or adult day care centers, and physicians' offices. HB219 would expand that authorization to include the practices of independently practicing advanced-practice nurses, including nurse practitioners and certified nurse midwives. MDHA views this legislation as giving dental hygienists the opportunity to partner with these medical practitioners to provide essential preventative services and increase education and awareness about the importance of oral health to a new patient population. MDHA takes this opportunity to note the care and time that was taken in 2019 to draft the underlying statutory language and respectfully requests that the proposed expansion adhere to the same consultation and practice structure that was imposed in that legislation to ensure predictability and consistency for dental hygienists practicing in different settings.

MDHA thanks Delegate Kelly and the members of the Committee for their leadership on dental health matters and looks forward to working with all stakeholders to improve oral health in Maryland. MDHA urges the Committee's favorable consideration of House Bill 219.