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Written Testimony in Support of 2022 HB 968

Health Occupations - Expanded Function Dental Assistants

Submitted by Charles Doring DDS

Dear members of the House Health & Government operations Committee. My name is Dr. Charles Doring and I am providing testimony in support of HB 968. I am a general dentist in Montgomery County, Legislative Affairs Committee Chair of the Maryland State Dental Association (MSDA) and a Maryland Healthy Smiles (Medicaid) provider. I am also a Member of the Maryland Healthy Smiles Provider Advisory Board, member of Maryland Task Force on Oral Health, and teach dental assisting for the Southern Maryland Dental Association.

National Dental Assistant Recognition Week is March 6-12, 2022. I can think of no better way to recognize the dental team members who comfort those patients who are fearful, are responsible for dental practices for following Center for Disease Control protocols, and skillfully provide 4-handed dentistry, than passage of HB 968.

My written testimony will hopefully answer the questions/concerns raised by all parties of interest. By resolution of the MSDA House of Delegates in September 2020, an ad hoc committee was formed to review the current scope of practice of the dental auxiliary workforce and make recommendation back to the MSDA House of Delegates. The ad hoc committee, under the direction of Dr. Eric Morse, did an extensive review of scope of dental auxiliaries as to what is the current scope, what is done in other jurisdictions, and made recommendations on how expanded function dental assistants can help provide better quality care for the patients of Maryland. In September 2021, the MSDA House of Delegates reviewed these recommendations and approved a resolution that directed the MSDA Legislative Affairs Committee to draft bill language as you see here. Since the initial bill drafting in November 2021, the MSDA Legislative Affairs Committee has been very transparent with parties of interest soliciting input from groups such as the Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners (MSBDE), Maryland Dental Assistants Association, Maryland Dental Hygienists Association, Maryland Dental Action Coalition, and the Dental Assisting National Board (DANB.org).

One concern raised has been related to education and testing to become certified in the 4 duties outlined in HB 968. DANB already has the certifying education curriculum goals and testing programs for Expanded Function Dental Assistants (EFDA). They have not been utilized in Maryland because these duties under authorization and direct supervision of a dentist are not yet authorized in Maryland. As background here is DANB's charge:

The Dental Assisting National Board (DANB) was founded in 1980 and is the national certification board for dental assistants. More than 37,000 dental assistants are currently DANB certified nationwide. DANB, a nonprofit organization, is a member of the Institute for Credentialing Excellence. DANB's CDA and COA certification programs are accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA).

DANB understands the importance of impartiality and potential conflicts of interests in carrying out its certification activities. Being impartial, and being perceived to be impartial, is necessary for DANB to be able to deliver credible certification programs that provide confidence to our candidates and certificants, our communities of interest, and the public. In order to obtain and maintain confidence, DANB will, at all times, be able to demonstrate that our decisions are based on objective evidence and that our decisions have not been improperly influenced by other interests or by other parties. The above statement is made by DANB in the interest of transparency and so that our candidates and certificants, our communities of interest, and the public may be aware of our intentions.

Another issue raised by the MSBDE has been its own workload issues registering EFDA's who have successfully completed course work and testing. HB 968 allows the MSBDE to collect registration fees to compensate for additional staff time required.

Lastly, some dental hygienists express concern about the duty of "coronal polishing" and the possibility that dental hygienists may be replaced by dental assistants. Coronal polishing is very different and limited as compared to a dental prophylaxis and the two should not be confused. HB 968 does not permit use of any type of scalers to remove dental plaque and dental calculus built up on the teeth that the dental hygienist would remove, usually prior to coronal polishing to remove surface extrinsic stain on the teeth. Dentistry has evolved into a team profession where dentists, dental hygienists, and dental assistants all have important functions in providing the best patient care. In recent discussions with DANB, I obtained the following information on how other states handle coronal polishing and have attached that information for your review.

For the above reasons, I ask that HB 968 be given a favorable report.

Sincerely,

Charles A. Doring DDS

Dear Dr. Doring and Dan,

My colleague and I reviewed our most up-to-date compilation of excerpts from statutes and rules related to the practice of dental assisting, and we have counted 41 states that expressly allow some level of dental assistant to perform coronal polishing:

1. Alaska
2. Arizona
3. Arkansas
4. California
5. Colorado
6. Connecticut
7. Florida
8. Georgia
9. Illinois
10. Indiana
11. Iowa
12. Kansas
13. Kentucky
14. Louisiana
15. Maine
16. Massachusetts
17. Minnesota
18. Mississippi
19. Missouri
20. Montana
21. Nebraska
22. Nevada
23. New Hampshire
24. New Mexico
25. North Carolina
26. North Dakota
27. Ohio
28. Oklahoma
29. Oregon
30. Pennsylvania
31. Rhode Island
32. South Carolina
33. South Dakota
34. Tennessee
35. Texas
36. Utah
37. Vermont
38. Virginia
39. Washington
40. West Virginia
41. Wyoming

In addition, there are five states that specifically prohibit delegation of coronal polishing to dental assistants: DC, Hawaii, Maryland, New Jersey, and New York.

The remaining states do not specifically address the issue.

If you need additional details about requirements in any of those states, please let me know and I will be happy to provide more information.

Have a great weekend!

Best regards,
Katherine

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