



Maryland
DENTAL HYGIENISTS'
ASSOCIATION

February 25, 2025

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, Room 3 West
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

SENATE BILL 792 – STATE BOARD OF DENTAL EXAMINERS – EXPANDED FUNCTION
DENTAL ASSISTANTS – EDUCATION AND REINSTATEMENT

Dear Chair Beidle and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Dental Hygienists Association (MDHA) is the professional association for dental hygienists providing services in Maryland. As an organization, MDHA seeks 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 those goals, MDHA takes this opportunity to submit testimony in support, with amendments, of Senate Bill 792 which adds additional educational paths for dental assistants seeking certification to perform certain expanded functions under current law. MDHA understands the need to diversify the "oral health team" and the increase role that dental assistants can play in providing affordable and accessible dental services. Additionally, MDHA is supportive of providing varied and accessible educational pathways for dental assistants, including online courses, so long as they appropriately cover the skills training needed for these practitioners to provide safe and effective services. This includes requiring adequate hands skill testing, as is currently required for dental hygienists and any other practitioners who perform the designated expanded functions under their scope of practice. Proper, hands-on training is an essential part of educating any practitioner who would be providing expanded function services on Maryland patients and Maryland should not dilute current educational requirements in a way that could increase risk for patients.

MDHA joins the State Board of Dental Examiners in ensuring that the education of EFDAs is safe and sufficient and asks that those requirements be specifically added to the legislation before moving forward with the additional educational programs listed in the bill. MDHA respectfully urges a favorable report on House Bill 792 with the requested amendments and stands ready to work with the Sponsor and the Committee to ensure this legislation moves forward in a manner that is safe for patients.