

SB 988 Support with MSDA amendments

(CF HB 1143)

Charles Doring DDS

Written Testimony in Support of SB 988

From Charles A. Doring DDS

A Maryland Healthy Smiles (Dental Medicaid) Provider

(Submitted 2/21/2025 for hearing 2/24/2025)

Dear Members of the Maryland Senate Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of SB 988 with proposed amendments from the Maryland State Dental Association (MSDA). I am a general dentist in a small group practice in Rockville that employes a team of 15 dental health providers and support staff. I am also the president-elect of the MSDA as well as a Dean's Faculty member at our University of Maryland School of Dentistry. I was a member of the 2022 Maryland Legislative Oral Health Care Task Force charged with finding solutions to dental health care disparities. I am speaking to you as an individual and dental Medicaid provider to you today.

School based oral examinations or dental screenings are a valuable method of trying to reduce the incidence and severity of childhood oral diseases, particularly, dental tooth decay (caries). Dental hygienists can play a valuable role in providing dental care in non-traditional settings such as school and nursing homes. SB 988 would permit a Maryland licensed dental hygienist under the general supervision of a "licensed" dentist. The concept is favorable but the oversight of such general supervision should site existing regulations on dental care performed outside of the traditional dental office when the dentist is not present on site. The amendments proposed by the MSDA provide patient safety and oversight of the care being provided. Among the amendments are 1) the supervising dentist have "an active general license to practice dentistry in the state", 2) supervising dentist have "at least 2 years of active clinical practice in direct patient care", 3) the dental hygienist provider have "at least 2 years of active clinical practice in direct patient care, 4) a Memorandum of Understanding be established between the dental providers and the school where care under general supervision is being performed, 5) proper parents or guardian consent for dental care is obtained, and 5) the supervising dentist be available consultation as needed when oral hygiene care is being provided.

The MSDA amendments provide access to dental care to a vulnerable population while at the same time provide safeguards the children deserve and the parents will expect.

For the above reasons, I request a favorable report on SB 988 with the amendments proposed by the Maryland State Dental Association.