



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners
Spring Grove Hospital Center - Benjamin Rush Bldg.
55 Wade Ave/Tulip Drive
Catonsville, MD 21228

2025 SESSION POSITION PAPER

BILL NO: SB 988
COMMITTEE: Finance
POSITION: Support with Amendment

TITLE: Dental Services -Dental Hygienists in Schools and School-Based Health Centers and the Maryland Collaborative to Improve Children’s Oral Health Through School-Based Programs

BILL ANALYSIS: Currently, in order for a licensed dental hygienist to practice in a school, the hygienist must meet certain experiential, supervision, and other requirements set forth in Md. Code Ann., Health Occ. §4-308(l). The Bill as written would provide an alternative pathway for hygienists to practice in schools or school-based health centers by only requiring that the hygienist file a statement with the Board. It would also establish the Maryland Collaborative to Improve Children’s Oral Health through School-Based Programs to study and make recommendations on ways to improve these programs.

POSITION AND RATIONALE: The Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners (the “Board”) supports SB 988 with the following amendments put forth by the Bill sponsor and the Board:

Amendment 1

Pages 2-3, delete section 1 in its entirety.

Amendment 2

Page 4, insert before line 1 “(6) THE CHAIR OF THE STATE BOARD OF DENTAL EXAMINERS, OR THE CHAIR’S DESIGNEE;”; line 1 renumber (6) to be (7); and line 3, renumber (7) to be (8).

Amendment 3

Page 5, line 10, strike “and”; insert “(5) CLARIFYING THE LAW GOVERNING THE PRACTICE OF DENTAL HYGIENISTS IN SCHOOL SETTINGS TO REDUCE

**CONFUSION AMONG PRACTITIONERS AND SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMS;
AND”;** and renumber (5) to be (6)

The Board has always been fully supportive of programs that seek to improve the oral health of children, especially those that are the most vulnerable. Early detection and maintaining good oral health for them is critical. Cavities are the most common chronic disease among children and untreated dental problems can lead to pain, infection, worsening of the dentition, difficulty eating and sleeping, other health conditions, social and emotional issues, and challenges in school. Preventive dental visits, such as checkups and dental cleanings, are essential to maintain good oral health and can address problems before they become more serious. Unfortunately, the bill as written, without the proper protocols the Board believes are essential, could potentially place children at risk should medical emergencies or other complications arise.

Conversely, the Board does support the creation of a Maryland Collaborative to Improve Children’s Oral Health Through School-Based Programs and would request that the Chair of the Board of Dental Examiners or their designee be added to the Collaborative.

For all of these reasons, the Board requests a favorable report on SB 988 with amendments. If you would like to discuss this further, please contact Chiyo Alie, Board President at chiyo.alie@maryland.gov or at 202-997-2606.

The opinion of the Board expressed in this document does not necessarily reflect that of the Department of Health or the Administration.