



To: Senate Government Operations Committee, Sen. Ruth Hardy, Chair
From: Vermont State Dental Society Executive Board, Dr. Steve Rayes, President
Date: March 30, 2023
Re: [H.305](#) Office of Professional Regulation Bill and in particular the use of Silver-Modified Atraumatic Restorative Technique (SMART)

The following summarizes the position of the Vermont State Dental Society Executive Board on the use of the clinical modality known as Silver-Modified Atraumatic Restorative Technique or SMART fillings as it pertains to the placement of these fillings by dental hygienists in the State of Vermont.

SMART fillings do not represent a substitute for definitive dental treatment. SMART fillings should be reserved as a provisional measure only until definitive dental therapy, including cavity removal, management of infected pulp tissues (the nerve of the tooth), and tooth removal when appropriate. Patients and patient care-givers should be advised that SMART fillings must be followed up multiple times a year until appropriate definitive dental therapy is completed (meaning a final and permanent filling can be placed). Furthermore, patients and caregivers must be advised that a lack of follow up may be associated with dental cavities getting worse, infection may occur, and the tooth may ultimately need to be removed if a dental cavity got bigger and caused too much loss of tooth structure.

The use of Silver Diamine Fluoride (Dental treatment solution used under a SMART filling) should not be considered as completely benign. The proper diagnosis of vitality of a tooth in a child can be very challenging (meaning that the tooth should be confirmed as having a healthy nerve or that it is still alive). This often will require the proper exposure and diagnosis of an x-ray as well as additional testing. It is highly recommended that teeth to be treated with SMART fillings be properly diagnosed prior to treatment. The nerve of teeth that are struggling due to deep cavities can also be negatively affected with the application of Silver Diamine Fluoride (the liquid that goes below the SMART filling) as it can be a pulp (Nerve) irritant if it is within close proximity. Direct exposure to SDF liquid to the nerve of a tooth can lead to nerve necrosis (the nerve dying), which would then require more complicated treatment to include possible tooth removal to resolve these issues. It is imperative that the child or adult have a

dental home in order to have a treatment mechanism should these complications arise.

This position is developed from a review of the scientific literature, as well as expert testimony from general dentists and dental specialists including pediatric dentists and endodontists. The scientific literature review reflects the best available evidence on the technique, biologic variability of oral bacteria, biomechanical weakness of dental fillings, as well as the wide variation in the techniques in providing this therapy.

The Vermont State Dental Society would further like to advocate for these types of decisions to flow through the governing body that exists for the dental profession in our state. This is the Board of Dental Examiners. They will ultimately be the body responsible for the rules and regulation as well as enforcement for procedures completed by Dental Hygienists. If the language as written in Bill H305 is adopted, the legislature is in essence stating that a Dental Hygienist is credentialed in the State of Vermont to perform these procedures. This would then obligate the Board of Dental Examiners to provide rules and regulations. This is getting the cart before the horse and circumventing the regulatory body. We recommend that this be returned to the regulatory body (Board of Dental Examiners) in collaboration with the Vermont Department of Health and the Vermont State Dental Society to explore this issue and subsequently propose the appropriate language to the legislature to alter the dental statutes.