



Department of Dental Hygiene
301 Lawrence Place
Williston, VT 05495

March 16, 2016

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee,

As was requested following my testimony I have attached a copy of the survey that was sent to all dentists in Vermont. There were a total of 121 surveys returned. Of those surveys 11 dentists stated that they would hire a dental therapist in their practice. One said no, "but not because he was opposed to it philosophically or otherwise". The dentists that provided an affirmative response and provided contact information were from the following counties: Caledonia, Orange, Rutland, Franklin, Addison, Windsor and Chittenden. Please note that some of the dentists who answered affirmatively did not provide information on the location of their practices. Ten dentists stated they were unsure if they would hire a dental therapist. Ten dentists were definitely interested in teaching in the Dental Therapy program and 7 were unsure if they were interested in teaching in the program.

I would like to add to my testimony yesterday in regards to the concern that some students might opt to enter our Bachelor of Science Dental Therapy program versus continuing their education in our Bachelor of Science Dental Hygiene program. These are two very different programs with the BS Dental Hygiene program being offered in a totally online format and the BS in Dental Therapy being offered totally onsite at our Williston campus. In addition, the BS Dental Hygiene program is geared towards individuals who would like to teach Dental Hygiene or be employed in dental sales or public health dental hygiene.

Lastly, for many years organized dentistry did not support dental hygienists administering local anesthetics to patients due to not having enough education and liability issues. Now most dentists will not employ a dental hygienist who is not endorsed in the administration of local anesthetics and it is now legal in all but 4 states in the country. Vermont was the first state east of the Mississippi to allow dental hygienists to administer local anesthetics. In addition, in 1997 the dental society opposed a change in the rules to allow dental hygienists to practice under general supervision in public health settings with a collaborative agreement of a dentist. Now the dental society is advocating for the use of dental hygienists in public health settings as a way to improve access to care.

Thank you for allowing me to testify yesterday and I hope that you will vote on the Bill shortly so that it can be heard in the other committees and the full House before the end of the legislative session.

Respectfully,

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