



SENATOR PEGGY LEHNER
6th Ohio Senate District

Committees:
Education (Chair)
Finance- Education Subcommittee
Medicaid
Health and Human Services
Criminal Justice

To: All Senators
From: Senator Peggy Lehner
Date: May 6, 2016
Re: Dental Access Now

Dear colleagues,

Access to oral health care has been the number one unmet health need for children and low-income adults for nearly two decades. Ohio has 84 dental health professional shortage areas where there are not enough dentists to meet the needs of each community. In addition, the shortage of dentists is projected to grow in the next decade which will further impact rural and underserved communities.

I am introducing legislation that will increase access to oral health care and diversify the dental care workforce. This legislation has four provisions to expand the reach of the dentist-led team with a priority on expanding access to care in underserved areas:

- Dental Hygienists—the bill will expand the reach of Dental Hygienists so they are able to provide their services to the full benefit of their education and training under general supervision of the dentist.
- Dental Therapist—the legislation will add a new proven provider to the dentist-led team. A dental therapist is educated and specially trained in a limited number of restorative and preventive procedures including filling cavities. By allowing dental therapists to perform a small number of routine services, dentists are freed up to focus on more complex cases or patients with multiple needs.
- Dental Hygienist Therapist—while we have a shortage of dentists, the same is not true for dental hygienists. Hygienists would be able to take additional training and be licensed to practice as a hygienist and a dental therapist.
- Underserved communities—to ensure that the new providers are working in communities with the greatest need, the practice of dental therapists would be limited to dental health professional shortage areas and with dentists who have 20 percent or more of their patient caseload from the Medicaid population.

Dental hygienists and dental therapists would always work under the supervision of the dentist and it will always be the dentist decision whether or not to employ a dental therapist or allow employees to work under general supervision.

We will not make a difference for Ohioans who do not have access to oral health until we increase the number of providers. We would greatly appreciate your support in co-sponsoring this legislation.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Peggy Lehner".

Senator Peggy Lehner

Ohio Senate Senate Building, Room 042 1 Capitol Square Columbus, Ohio 43215
Email: SD06@ohiosenate.gov Phone: 614-466-4538