

PRAIRIE BAND POTAWATOMI NATION

February 24, 2015

Chairwoman Mary Pilcher-Cook
Members of the Public Health and Welfare Committee

Testimony in Support of House Bill 2079

The Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation became an organized Indian Tribal entity in 1976. Under the Prairie Band Potawatomi Constitution, the Tribal Council is charged with the duty of protecting the health, security and general welfare of the Nation and its members and of regulating law and order on the reservation.

The United States has a fundamental trust responsibility to provide health care to Indian people, but funding continues to be provided at a fraction of need.

The Nation operates a health care clinic pursuant to a compact with the Indian Health Service under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, which is equipped with resources and technology to provide dental services. The Nation's Health Center is also a participating provider with each of the managed care organizations that make up KanCare.

The Nation is concerned that tribal members receive and have access to excellent medical and dental care. Dental services for tribal members are important to their overall health.

Dental services for children always have been included in Medicaid coverage but the KanCare program extends coverage of preventative dental services to adults. Adults cannot access that care if there is no local provider.

House Bill 2079 provides for the creation of a new category of dental provider, a Registered Dental Practitioner, which would allow dental hygienists who receive advanced training and pass a comprehensive exam to work under the supervision of a dentist to provide routine and preventative care.

The Nation and its Tribal Council supports this legislation, which would increase the pool of professional dental service providers, thereby helping to alleviate the shortage of dental providers at the Nation's Health Center and facilitating increased access to dental services.

Thank you.