



School of Dentistry

To: Chairman, Mr. Dan Hawkins
House Committee on Health and Human Services

From: Dr. Connie White, Assistant Dean for Community Relations and Communications,
UMKC School of Dentistry

Date: February 23, 2015

Re: Testimony on House Bill 2079

Chairman Hawkins and members of the Committee, I am Dr. Connie White, Assistant Dean of Community Relations and Communication at the University of Missouri, Kansas City School of Dentistry. Thank you for the opportunity to visit with you this afternoon. I am honored to represent my school.

We at the School of Dentistry continue our steadfast commitment to educating the future dentists and dental hygienists of our multi-state region. Our dental students and dental hygiene students have never been more talented and caring, and our faculty never more excellent and dedicated to our mission of service to our patients.

As our primary mission, our school educates future dentists and dental hygienists. Each program has their own separate curriculum, standards, and competencies which must be met as established by CODA, our accrediting body. These programs do operate independently of one another, with the exception of several courses that are taught together. These courses are Ethics, Radiology, Perio I and II, and Histopathology. The focus of our two programs can best be illustrated by a diagram which shows two circles that overlap in one corner where these aforementioned courses intersect.

Our dental students embark on a four year dental school curriculum following four years pursuing an undergraduate degree. They spend the first two years of dental school in didactic coursework and pre-clinical laboratories, where they learn the intricacies of tooth preparation, restoration placement, denture fabrication, endodontic treatment, and pediatric restorative. In the following two years of dental school, they treat their own patients eight hours a day, four and one half days per week, to perfect these skills in a clinical setting. The dental student is educated in this broad spectrum of knowledge across every discipline in dentistry over this four year period.

Our dental hygiene students initiate their training following a two year undergraduate curriculum and embark on a two year dental hygiene program with us. They have didactic coursework, and at least one laboratory which prepares them clinically, with a more targeted focus on the skill set to recognize, prevent, and manage periodontal disease. They spend two days a week over a two year period treating our preventive maintenance patients and early to moderate periodontal disease patients.

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School of Dentistry

Our dental and dental hygiene students are well trained and graduate as competent practitioners. The skill sets they possess have overlap, but follow directly the established curricula, which are by design, very different.

In the past year, our dental and dental hygiene students have had 65,000 active patient visits, thousands of which have come to us from patients in your state. We are proud of the \$650,000 in uncompensated care that our students have provided this year alone. This total comes from care within the school, at multiple community health facilities, nursing homes, hospitals, and rural clinics across our two state regions. We do understand the plight of our patients that need us, and we are committed to serving them--regardless of where they live.

Our school has been active in the proposed establishment of a satellite school of dentistry in Joplin, Missouri. The didactic program, as planned, would be delivered via distance education and online learning strategies. The "Home" facility would provide needed pre-clinical laboratory space, classroom space with the appropriate technology, and patient care space. This satellite school would be a small facility leveraging multiple funding sources from public and private sectors, in addressing the oral health needs of both of our states. Critical to our success of this program would be to focus the development and recruitment of the students from the area of need. The new dental professionals would then return to their local communities to establish practices and provide care. This establishment of a regional dental school program brings needed dental care to areas of need and recruits students specifically from those areas.

The feasibility study has been completed and the University of Missouri leadership are in full support. We continue to move forward in establishing the location, the facility (laboratory and clinical space), and last but not least, money.

The most important message is that this model can be used in the development of future regional and /or local schools in Kansas. It will allow us to bring schools, future dentists, and dental hygienists to where they are needed.

Our next initiative, the ECP3 program, which was launched at our school of dentistry in the spring of 2013, continues. This opportunity for Kansas licensed dental hygienists allows for additional training and performance of such procedures as decay removal, adjustment of dentures and extraction of primary teeth. Since 2013, we have seen the graduation of 36 dental hygienists. We are in the process of accepting students for the 2015 program.

Our dental school continues to seek innovative strategies in caring for the needs of our patients in at-risk communities. Always, regardless of strategy, the health and safety of our patients must be our first priority.

Thank you very much for your kind consideration

Dr. Connie White

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Connie L. White, D.D.S." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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