



# ECKAN

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Testimony to Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee  
SB 49 Kansas dental board; licensure of registered dental practitioners  
February 23, 2015  
Richard Jackson, CEO

Chair Pilcher-Cook and members of the Committee:

We appreciate this opportunity to present testimony in support of SB 49. By approving Registered Dental Practitioners to work in Kansas we can ensure that Kansans have safe and affordable access to dental care in the communities in which they live.

Kansas is facing a serious shortage in the dental workforce. Registered Dental Practitioners are a common sense, cost effective solution to this problem. Currently, hundreds of thousands of Kansans lack access to dental care. Vulnerable Kansans, including the elderly, people with disabilities and children are principally affected.

Lack of access to dental care is an issue that ECKAN knows about all too well. This past year ECKAN helped facilitate needed dental care for 428 of its customers in a seven county coverage area (Anderson, Coffey, Douglas, Franklin, Lyon, Osage and Miami counties). Despite having adequate financial resources in place, this service proved itself to be quite challenging. Unfortunately, early in our planning sessions we discovered that many of the rural, and even some of the more populated communities that we serve, do not have dental providers. As such, in addition to helping our customers with the costs of dental care, we also had to arrange transportation to dental providers that were as far as 75 miles away from our customers' communities. We were able to issue gas vouchers to some of our customers, but many of the people that we serve are without adequate transportation.

Much like Physicians Assistants and Nurse Practitioners did in addressing the medical workforce shortage, Registered Dental Practitioners will help alleviate the shortage in the dental workforce. Approving Dental Practitioners to work in Kansas will provide Kansans with greater access to much needed dental care. ECKAN supports SB 49 and encourages the Committee to recommend it favorably.