

Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee
Testimony in support of SB 49: Dental Mid-Level Provider
By Jill Gottschamer RDH, BHS
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Thank you Chairwoman Pilcher-Cook for this opportunity to comment on SB 49, a proposal for a new mid-level dental provider in Kansas. I am Jill Gottschamer RDH, BHS a licensed practicing Registered Dental Hygienist. I have practiced for 25 years and I am very aware of the issues involved.

This is an AMAZING Bill! As with all Bills, having all parties agree on its contents is an impossibility. With that being said, the issues facing Kansas' unserved and underserved is undebatable. We have a shortage of dental providers and we need to figure out a REAL solution. No more talking about what would work, let's implement something! Reality tells us that building a dental school is an impossibility due to funds. Loan repayment for dental school graduates has been supported too. Unfortunately the pool for loan repayment opened up to include medical personnel and our dental graduates are not getting them. Now what? Why not a new dental practitioner that can do simple fillings and extractions. And why not incorporate the hygienists who are abundant in our state, can't find jobs, already have the foundations of the education finished and the new provider can work dually as a practitioner and hygienist. It makes sense! The state would not have to provide any money for the schools to implement these programs also. That is a win-win for us all.

I have been told that these providers would be undereducated. I'm here to tell you that they will not! Hygienists already have many of the foundation classes that the dentists get in dental school. For example: radiology, my DDS that I work for and I have the exact same book from school. We took the same class but I took it in an undergraduate program, hygiene school, and they took it in post-graduate, program, dental school. Also remember that these new mid-level providers will have to take the exact same Board Exam for specific procedures in order to get licensed that the dentists had to take. For example: the dentists take an exam on doing fillings with criteria they must meet to pass, the mid-level provider will have to take the exact same portion of the exam with the exact same criteria to meet in order to pass. It makes sense!

I have also been told that many think that these new providers will be unsafe. I'm here to tell you that they will not! In fact, in Minnesota the quality of work that these providers are doing is actually better than that of the dentists coming out of school. I can provide you with a report to support this too. These types of providers have been in 50 other countries for over 25 years. If they were unsafe then you would have either heard about extensively by now or there would not be these providers out there.

It is my understanding that some of you think that since this provider still bills through a DDS that they will not provide any relief to the targeted areas. I will tell you that they will help in clinics across our state specifically where there is a fee schedule for payment. I know this Bill will not help everyone but it is a start! Clinics cannot keep dentists who are not receiving loan reimbursement so our situation grows and grows for now.

Please consider working this Bill to help the unserved and underserved in Kansas! Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

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