

UMKC School of Dentistry

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

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

Date: February 14, 2017

Re: Testimony on House Bill 2139

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 prepare written comments on HB 2139. 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, Periodontology 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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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 and at multiple community health facilities, nursing homes, hospitals, and rural clinics across our two state region. We do understand the plight of our patients that need us, and we are committed to serving them—regardless of where they live.

Our ECP3 program was launched at UMKC School of Dentistry in the spring of 2013. 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 60 dental hygienists. We have accepted 19 students for the 2017 program. This program then, already serves as an additional dental health care provider in your state.

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

Sincerely,

Dr. Connie White, DDS

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