

Senate Health & Human Services
 04/25/2022 01:30 PM
 SB22-219 Regulate Dental Therapists
 Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Brittani White Against Self	<p>I have been practicing dental hygiene for 7 years, 3 of which I practiced in a Medicaid clinic. While I support access to care, especially for the underserved community, I have some reservations about the this bill introducing Dental Therapists to Colorado.</p> <p>I have read the bill and do not see anywhere that addresses how long a dental therapy program should be or what level of education it will require. In my opinion a dental therapy program should be a masters level program. Dental therapists are supposed to have an education and skill level between that of a dental hygienist and a dentist. A dentist is a doctorate level degree. Dental hygiene is a minimum of an associate degree, however it typically takes 4 years to complete and many hygienists continue to receive their bachelors degree (much like nurses).</p> <p>If we are to compare dental therapists to other mid-level providers, it would be easiest to compare them to nurse practitioners and physician assistants, both of which are masters level degrees. I do not believe any lower level of education will be adequate enough for a dental therapist to be treating patients on their own, even under the indirect supervision of a dentist.</p> <p>Another concern that I have is that the bill does not address how it will ensure that dental therapists will serve the underserved. Will they be required to work in rural areas? Will they be required to accept Medicaid? If we aren't ensuring that dental therapists will be serving the underserved, I do not believe it is appropriate to continue with this bill.</p>
Laura Jacob Amend Self	<p>My name is Laura Jacob. Although I am a past Colorado Dental Hygienists' Association President and past Colorado Board of Dental Examiners member, I am speaking only as a licensed Colorado Dental Hygienist.</p> <p>I am baffled why the bill's initiator Healthier Colorado would ram this bill down the professions of dentistry and dental hygiene in the final weeks of the legislative session without the collaboration or appreciation for the Colorado Dental Practice Act. It is unconceivable to me as a Colorado citizen that this organization needs to be sneaky and back-handed to pass a bill that appears to be a problem solver yet is rot with incongruency and appreciation for the progressive scope of practice already afforded to Colorado Dental Hygienists. I am not opposed to the dental therapist, and I agree there is a shortage of providers especially in rural communities. This is simply not the answer.</p>

	<p>I have been told the bill will pass, despite these arrogancies, so I speak to AMEND Senate Bill 22-219. I implore the Senate Health and Human Services Committee to refute the current amendments made to the composition of the Colorado Dental Board. Please retain the three Dental Hygiene Members and three Public Members. The addition of one Dental Therapist would be lofty as there are currently ZERO licensed Dental Therapists in Colorado. The board already has a disparity as there are nearly equal dental and dental hygiene licensees, yet less than half representation by the dental hygiene members. The public members bring an enormous benefit to the perspectives of the board and continue to hold the professions accountable to the citizens of Colorado. It would be a travesty and disservice to reduce either of these contingencies.</p> <p>Currently: SECTION 7. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 12-220-105, amend (1)(a), (1)(b), (1)(c), (2)(b), and (2)(c) as follows: (b) (I) EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN SUBSECTION (1)(b)(II) OF THIS SECTION, the board consists of seven dentist members, three TWO DENTAL THERAPIST MEMBERS, three TWO dental hygienist members, and three TWO members from the public at large.</p> <p>Proposed: ...the board consists of seven dentist members, ONE DENTAL THERAPIST, THREE dental hygienists members, and THREE members from the public at large.</p> <p>Thank you for your conscious consideration.</p>
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