



Massachusetts Dental Hygienists, We Need Your Help!

Committees must take action on bills by February 7th, 2024 (“Joint Rule 10”).

Before this date, the Committee needs to hear from Dental Hygienists on why these pieces of legislation are critical to the work that you do every day.

To help advance this legislation, please use the template below to write to the Chairs of the Joint Committee on Public Health, Senator Julian Cyr (julian.cyr@masenate.gov) and Representative Marjorie Decker (Marjorie.Decker@mahouse.gov). When sending your email, please also CC committee staff (Marisa.Bartolotta@mahouse.gov; kathleen.Patron@masenate.gov)

THANK YOU for your support of MDHA and your profession!

*******TEMPLATE EMAIL*****:**

Dear Chair Cyr and Chair Decker,

On behalf of the Massachusetts Dental Hygienists’ Association (MDHA) and the many Dental Hygienists practicing across the state, thank you for your commitment to uplifting the oral healthcare workforce and your work towards an equitable healthcare system for workers and patients alike. My name is [insert name], and I am a [practicing DH at XX institution/DH student at XX school/etc.], and I am writing to you today to urge a favorable report of two key bills before the Joint Committee on Public Health ahead of the Joint Rule 10 deadline: **S.1357/ H.2241, *An Act enabling trained dental hygienists to administer dermal fillers and botox***, and **S.1379/H.2253, *An Act to improve oral health for all Massachusetts residents***. We are also supporting **S.1429/ H.2216, *An Act relative to dental hygienists***, and **H.2255, *An Act relative to the sustainability of public health dental hygienists through adequate reimbursements***.

S.1357/H.2241, would enable trained dental hygienists to administer dermal fillers and botox under the supervision of a dentist. Dental hygienists, with their extensive head and neck anatomy training, possess a level of expertise that surpasses the amount of training of many other practitioners who administer Botox. We would like to underscore that Botox is not just a cosmetic treatment, but is leveraged to handle TMJ, chronic migraines, teeth grinding, and other problems that are already diagnosed in a dental office. Many dentists and dental offices want their dental hygienists to be able to administer Botox and fillers to bring in and retain patients, which also streamlines appointments and providers for patients, lessening barriers to care. I respectfully urge a favorable report of this bill because [if applicable, insert personal stories, motivations, or connections to this issue that emphasize the need for this legislation].

I would also like to weigh in in support of **S.1379/H.2253**, *An Act to improve oral health for all Massachusetts residents*. This legislation would create a midlevel oral health practitioner called a "dental therapist" in Massachusetts and address the continued gap in oral healthcare access across the state. Currently, only 4 out of 10 dentists practicing in the state serve residents on MassHealth, leaving almost 50% of cities and towns with no dentist willing to accept any MassHealth-eligible patients. Additionally, 61 Massachusetts towns and cities are designated as Dental Health Professional Shortage Areas. Following the "nurse practitioner model" of midlevel healthcare delivery, Dental Therapists would provide affordable and accessible oral healthcare to thousands of Massachusetts residents currently unable to access necessary care from a dentist or dental hygienist. I respectfully ask for a favorable report of this bill because [if applicable, insert personal stories, motivations, or connections to this issue that emphasize the need for this legislation].

Additionally, I would like to write in support of bills **S.1429/ H.2216**, *An Act relative to dental hygienists*, and **H.2255**, *An Act relative to the sustainability of public health dental hygienists through adequate reimbursements*. For more than 40 years, dental hygienists have safely administered nitrous oxide to patients under the supervision of dentists in 35 states that have passed similar legislation. S.1429/ H.2216 would enable dental hygienists who have obtained a special permit and undergone the necessary training to administer nitrous oxide to patients while under the direct supervision of a dentist — critically decreasing barriers to care for patients and improving efficiency for dental care practices. H.2255 would allow public health dental hygienists (PHDHs) in Massachusetts to bill third-party insurance carriers for the services that they provide. As a result, this bill would increase the ability of patients on both public and private healthcare plans to access dental care in Massachusetts and ensure that PHDHs are being adequately reimbursed for services they are providing. I kindly ask for your favorable report of these bills.

As a [practicing RDH/DH student] in the Commonwealth, I respectfully request that you report favorably on the aforementioned bills ahead of the Joint Rule 10 deadline to increase the equitable delivery of oral healthcare throughout the state. We are thankful for your partnership and hope to see these bills move forward promptly.

Sincerely,

[Name]

[Title (if applicable)]