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From: ZCKORBA@aol.com
Sent: Sunday, September 28, 2008 4:25 PM
To: ST-Dentistry@state.pa.us
Cc: IRRC
Subject: Support of Proposed Changes in Dental Hygiene Regulations

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INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

Christopher Grovich, Esq.
State Board of Dentistry

Dear Mr. Grovich,

As a dental hygienist in PA for the last 6 years, I am excited and supportive of the proposed changes to the Dental Hygiene Scope of Practice.

For the last 3 years, I have also been employed as a dental hygienist for the Manheim Township School District. It has been very rewarding yet, at times, a distressing experience. I am grateful to be able to provide preventive education and dental screenings to the children in this district. However, it breaks my heart when I examine a child and find severe decay and learn that they have been missing class time due to toothaches. When I ask if they have been to a dentist to address their problems, most children answer that their parents can't find a dentist that will take their insurance or that their family doesn't have transportation to take them to a dentist. Some children also hide the pain from their parents because they are afraid to add to the burden of financial stresses their parents already have. They would rather keep quiet, not complain and deal with the intense pain caused by teeth that are literally rotten/half missing than to cause a burden to their families.

Fortunately, the recent establishment of the Brush Brush Smile Bus (a mobile dental clinic) within the last 3 years has helped to provide dental care to many of the children in my district as well as to many children in the other Lancaster County schools. Even this mobile dental unit faces roadblocks. Their service restricted by the availability of the dentist and the number of days they can visit one or two schools per school district. As mentioned by Beth Zimmerman, RDH (in another letter of support to the DH regulations) if a dentist is not present, they most postpone their visit to a school. As a result, less children may be seen over the course of the school year. Lancaster County is fortunate for such a public service to exist for our school children, but more has to be done to provide greater access to care for these children.

The creation of the public health dental hygienist will allow dental hygienists to reach many of the economically disadvantaged families either in schools or in public health clinics/facilities. The children, the future of Pennsylvania, need more help in getting access to care-- now.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Zena Korba, BA, RDH

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