

**Stephen Hoffman**

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As a public health dental hygiene practitioner living through a pandemic, I find it even more important for the legislation regarding public health dental hygiene practitioners, to be approved.

Access to care is limited.

Dental offices are overwhelmed with dental emergencies, increased oral health issues, over due patients, etc.

Dentists have chosen to retire early or close their practices due to the financial strain related to the pandemic or fear of exposure.

Thus, the number of patients and individual dentist needs to see has increased. With this legislation, public health dental hygiene practitioners will be able to help more people have access to care. People with have access to oral hygiene care and education, and referrals to a licensed dentist. This will help establish a dental home for patients.

There are increasing numbers of people in nursing homes, assisted living, and skilled nursing facilities. Many times these people cannot get out of those facilities for dental care. Public health dental hygiene practitioners would give these people access to care that they might not otherwise receive.

The same holds true for prisons and mental health facilities.

Children are living everyday in dental pain due to limited access of dental care in rural areas. Public health dental hygiene practitioners would bridge that gap and educate in hopes that healthy habits are adopted.

These are just a few reasons that I am passionate and supportive of the legislation being proposed.

Thank you,  
Valerie Styers RDH, PHDHP