



**State Board of Dentistry Proposed Regulation #16A-4633: Public Health
Hygiene Practitioner Practice Sites**

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Doreen Weeks, and I am a PHDHP. I would like to make a comment about the proposed vote concerning expanding acceptable practice sites at which a public health dental hygiene practitioner may practice.

I am involved with a grant by Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), which is geared towards incorporating medical-dental integration. I work full time with WellSpan Health. Allowing PHDHPs to practice in medical facilities would increase access to dental preventative visits. When I was in dental hygiene school, it was instilled in us to honor the link between oral health and overall health. I have tried to continue this method in my career, which up to this point was in private practice. I always had a desire for the opportunity to serve the underserved and open doors for access to care, but never knew how to do it on my own until my recent opportunity with WellSpan Health. I am so excited for this journey.

It would be a benefit to the public allowing PHDHPs to practice within medical facilities. It is in no way meant to replace the public from finding a dental home, just the opposite. I believe if PHDHPs can create good experiences for the individuals we treat in a shared medical dental appointment, we can create a warm handoff to a dental facility.

Can you imagine an individual at an Opioid Use Disorder facility, receiving a joint appointment? Shared medical dental appointments for Perinatal women? Pediatrics? Having access to preventive care with minimal disruptions in their day. We are another gateway for their path to health. Educating, advocating, gaining their trust. This eliminates the travel issue, if they can receive preventive services while at the facility for their regularly scheduled appointment. I could have all radiographs, periodontal charting, intra-oral photos, transillumination images ready for the provider that cares for them next. Advancing teledentistry regarding PHDHPs, would be extremely helpful also.

Delivering shared appointments at medical practices would open so many doors for the underserved. I wholeheartedly believe in creating better

communication with all medical and dental providers. We are a team, and cannot have success without each other. I will continue to advocate for improved access to care for the rest of my career. Dentistry and serving the public is my passion. I will empower all providers I work with for eternity. We can achieve remarkable things when we work together.

Please consider passing the proposed expansion of acceptable practice sites at which a public health dental hygiene practitioner may practice.

Sincerely,

Doreen K Weeks, RDH, PHDHP