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Ariel O'Malley
Board Counsel
State Board of Dentistry
Department of State
PO Box 69523
Harrisburg PA 17106-9523

April 4, 2019

Dear Ms. O'Malley:

I am writing on behalf of the Pennsylvania Dental Hygienists' Association (PDHA) and as a registered dental hygienist who holds a license as a Public Health Dental Hygiene Practitioner (PHDHP) in support of rulemaking 16A-4633.

The PDHA is committed to expanding practice sites to increase access to care for individuals who may not be able to obtain services from a traditional brick and mortar dental setting. The PHDHP, while not providing a diagnosis, is educated to recognize disease and can help navigate a patient to their proper dental home.

I have been a dental hygienist in various practice settings for 30+ years including long-term care and assisted living facilities. There is an established link between oral health and overall body health most especially in the at-risk populations of those with special needs and medical vulnerability. A PHDHP will be able to offset the effects of bacterial overload by providing staff education and direct patient care.

The utilization of a PHDHP in alternative practice settings will increase access to quality oral health for those who otherwise might miss the opportunity to find a true dental home.

In summary, the PDHA **supports** rulemaking 16A-4633 Public Health Dental Hygiene Practitioner Practice Sites and respectfully requests acceptance of the rulemaking as proposed.

Thank you for your consideration and support.

Sincerely,

Carolynn B. Wahl

Carolynn B. Wahl, BSDH, PHDHP
PDHA Government Relations Chair