



February 14, 2012

To: The Chair and Committee – House, Executive Departments and Administration
From: New Hampshire Oral Health Coalition

Re: HB 1190 - 2012, AN ACT relative to the dental hygienists committee of the dental board.

My name is Gail T. Brown, and I am the Policy Director for the New Hampshire Oral Health Coalition.

The Coalition, convened in 2002 by the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services and the Endowment for Health, is a state-wide diverse collaborative of organizations, agencies and individuals focusing on oral health education, prevention, access, workforce development, and advocacy aimed to promote optimal oral health for the people of New Hampshire. The Coalition developed the New Hampshire Oral Health Plan: A Framework for Action that serves our state as an implementation plan to ensure the oral health of the people of New Hampshire.

First, we would like to thank the sponsors of this bill, and those with pending amendments, for their ongoing efforts and interest in moving forward oral health issues within their districts and the state. This work is important to the health of our state, and your efforts make a difference.

At this time, we take no position specific to HB1190 for the reasons outlined below but given the interdependent relationship between oral health and overall health, we feel that any bill relating to oral health is important and should be examined for its potential in the bigger context of change for the improvement of oral health within the state.

HB1190 and the current statute RSA 317-A:2-a both are based on the existence of a committee for dental hygiene within the board of dental examiners. We have examined both, and find that at their foundation, both establish a committee and neither version proposes any increased risk of harm to the public; any differences identified in the two versions are specific to professional regulation.

Professional self-regulation is a significant and wide-reaching issue. Although, the Coalition does not focus on professional regulation and licensure issues per se, we recognize that the regulation of dental hygienists is an evolving and current issue both locally and nationally with emerging data indicating a level of causality between increased self-regulation and increased oral health access. A variety of models on dental hygiene regulation are in place throughout the country. We will continue to follow this important issue closely.

Today, we ask you, as legislators, to ensure that this conversation continues.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak.

For further information or assistance:

Gail T. Brown, Policy Director, 603-415-5550 or gbrown@nhoralhealth.org