



April 2, 2015

Hon. Beth McCann, Chair  
House Health, Environment and Insurance Committee  
Colorado State Capitol  
200 East Colfax Avenue  
Denver, CO 80203

*RE: HB 15-1309, Interim Therapeutic Restorations by Dental Hygienists*

Dear Representative McCann and members of the Committee:

Oral Health Colorado (OHC), on behalf of its network of Colorado organizations interested in improving oral health for all Coloradans, wishes to express its support for HB 15-1309.

Support for tele-dentistry and expanding the scope of work for dental hygienists emerged from a series of workshops hosted by the Caring for Colorado Foundation. Stakeholders present unanimously supported using technology to improve access to dental care and connecting patients to a dental home. The legislation before you today provides the necessary legislative changes to accomplish that.

With a record 1.1 million people now covered for dental care under Medicaid, Colorado must respond to the demand by adopting innovative models. Passing HB 15-1309 will support and expand the impact of a number of exciting initiatives recently launched by Colorado's oral health funders and partners.

Caring for Colorado Foundation is working to improve access to dental care through a new program entitled SMILES (Spanning Miles in Linking Everyone to Services) Dental Home. The project will deploy Registered Dental Hygienists into community settings such as schools, Head Start Centers, assisted-living sites, senior centers and residential and day programs for people with disabilities to provide dental care in the community. The community setting will serve as the dental home where people receive their routine, preventive dental care. Those with treatment needs are linked to a dental office for care.

Delta Dental of Colorado Foundation has launched the Colorado Medical-Dental Integration Project, which aims to reduce the gap by integrating a dental hygienist to provide preventive dental care to children. The dental hygienist will be a part of the care team in 17 Colorado primary medical clinics.

The Colorado Dental Association's Community Dental Health Program is working to partner with interested rural and underserved communities to open new dental facilities in these areas and focuses on connecting dentists who can provide restorative treatment with communities in need.

All of these organizations plus Colorado's non-profit clinics and federally qualified health centers support HB 15-1309 as it provides another tool for meeting the dental needs of the communities they serve.

Please support HB 15-1309 and provide many Coloradans increased access to dental care.

Sincerely,

Deborah Foote, Executive Director