

Bonhomme, Penny

From: mhurley@bridgeport.edu
Sent: Friday, March 16, 2012 3:30 PM
To: PHC Testimony
Subject: HB 5541

My name is Meeghan Hurley and I am a second year student at the University of Bridgeport, Fones School of Dental Hygiene. I am writing to you in favor of Health Bill #5541.

As a second year student, we are able to enter the community and use our skills to help those who would otherwise have no access to care. The abilities that the Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner (ADHP) will have will allow us to help a much broader scope of people. Without the ability to provide a diagnosis limits what we can do for those who are currently in severe pain or those who will not have immediate access to care. If we recognize an oral lesion on the palate of a geriatric resident in an assisted living home, we cannot tell them what it is or how to alleviate any pain because that would be a part of diagnosing an issue. When we provide tooth brush cleanings, debridement, apply preventative sealants and take bitewings at our in-school clinic rotation, we see children with decay and oral lesions. These children would not have the access to dental care at all if not for the school. We see decayed teeth but can provide no treatment to restore the tooth. If we could restore the tooth and provide a filling, we would be treating the entire school community to prevent the spread of decay and oral disease. If we could actually state that a tooth is decayed, not report that there is an area of suspicion it would make a bigger impact on both child and guardian. If we could physically provide a service that day for a child or elder, we provide a healthier way of life and provide access to care that gives them the ability to function naturally.

The public's health should be everyone's first priority, not the need to run a health care facility according to wants. By implementing the Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner role, the public is being put first.

By using a collaborative management agreement, both the dentist and the ADHP will be able to work with the patient and recognize the patient's needs. Two heads are better than one and if the patient is the primary person of concern, I do not understand why this needs to be discussed; rather it should be implemented as soon as possible to better the overall field of dentistry and improve general health status. As health professionals, we want to develop long-lasting relationships with our client's both inside private office but also with the general public.

Developing ties of trust and confidence within a community is at our fingertips, if we could just reach out and grab it.

Yours Truly,
Meeghan Hurley, SDH