

March 3, 2016



John F. Erhard III, DDS, Chairman
State Board of Dentistry
PO Box 2649
Harrisburg, PA 171-5-2649

Dear Dr. Erhard:

The Pennsylvania Dental Hygienists' Association (PDHA), which represents the interests of Pennsylvania's over 9,000 Registered Dental Hygienists, requests your consideration of the addition of the following practice locations to the regulated settings of the Public Health Dental Hygiene Practitioner (PHDHP) under 33.205b:

- 1) Private settings of hospice and home-bound patients
- 2) Primary care settings, including pediatric settings
- 3) Childcare settings

Recent passage of HB 1275, now Act 60 of 2015, allows the State Board of Dentistry more discretion in expanding practice sites to "locations" rather than "institutions". The intent of this language, offered by Sen. Patricia H. Vance, Chair of the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee, was to provide an opportunity for those home-bound or in hospice care to be able to receive preventive dental care in their homes or in hospice settings. In the original statute, also sponsored by Sen. Vance, the SBOD's discretion was limited to only institutional sites.

As the Commonwealth moves to shift more care from institutional to community settings for Managed Long Term Services and Supports (MLTSS), the need for home-bound patients to receive services will significantly increase. Transportation for home-bound patients is difficult to arrange and expensive. Allowing PHDHPs with portable equipment to serve home-bound patients will afford the Medicaid Managed Care Organizations (MA MCOs) a more affordable option to provide services to these patients and help to improve their oral health outcomes.

Additionally, inter-professional care is now becoming a standard. Pediatric medical offices and other primary care settings see populations that need the most preventive oral health care on a regular basis for well-child visits. It is a perfect setting to deliver safe and effective oral hygiene education and services. Centers that provide childcare to low-income individuals are taking care of the neediest populations.

For these reasons, we believe the inclusion of these locations would improve access to oral health care in the Commonwealth, and improve the oral health of our citizens.

As it is now within your authority to add these locations, we sincerely hope that you will address this task as quickly as possible. We welcome the opportunity to address the SBOD on this issue should you have any questions.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Christi Binder, RDH, BS, PHDHP, President
Pennsylvania Dental Hygienists' Association