

Testimony in Support of LD 2030:
An Act to Expand the Scope of Practice of Independent Dental Hygienists

Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee,

My name is Dr. Kailee Jorgenson, and I am writing in strong support of LD 2030, *An Act to Expand the Scope of Practice of Independent Dental Hygienists*. This legislation is an important and necessary step toward aligning Maine law with the education, training, and licensure of Independent Practice Dental Hygienists (IPDHs), while improving access to oral health care across the state.

LD 2030 would allow IPDHs to practice at the top of their license by authorizing them to provide services such as the administration of nitrous oxide and the delivery of local anesthetic. Currently, Maine law limits these services to general or direct supervision by a dentist, which is inconsistent with the intent and scope of the IPDH license. IPDHs are licensed specifically to practice independently, yet existing restrictions prevent them from fully utilizing the skills they are educated, trained, and examined to perform.

Both nitrous oxide administration and local anesthetic delivery require advanced education, clinical training, and demonstrated competency. Dental hygienists who provide these services must meet rigorous licensure requirements and maintain ongoing competency through continuing education. These are not experimental or high-risk procedures; when performed by properly trained professionals, they are well-established, safe, and carry minimal risk to the population.

Allowing IPDHs to deliver these services independently will expand access to care, particularly for underserved populations, rural communities, older adults, individuals with disabilities, and patients who experience anxiety or pain that may otherwise prevent them from receiving necessary oral health services. Removing unnecessary supervisory barriers enables IPDHs to deliver comprehensive, patient-centered care in a timely and efficient manner.

Importantly, expanding the scope of practice does not eliminate collaboration. It is recommended that all IPDHs obtain and maintain referral relationships and practice connections with licensed dentists and specialists. These professional relationships ensure that patients receive appropriate referrals and that any complications arising from care, including those related to nitrous oxide or local anesthetic, can be managed promptly and effectively.

LD 2030 represents a thoughtful, evidence-based approach to modernizing Maine's oral health workforce. It supports patient safety, professional accountability, and access to care while respecting the education and competence of Independent Practice Dental Hygienists.

I respectfully urge the committee to vote "Ought to Pass" on LD 2030. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

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