

Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services

4/24/2025 Public Hearing 1pm

LD 1361 An Act to Require Insurance Coverage for Covered Dental Services Provided by Licensed Dental Hygienists and to Authorize Licensed Dental Hygienist to Bill Commercial Dental Insurance

Good Afternoon Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson and members of the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services.

~~My name is Bonnie Vaughan IPDH, MEd, MBA. I am a dental hygienist and currently I am Executive Director of Kennebec Valley Family Dentistry, a nonprofit dental center in Augusta Maine. I'm speaking in support of LD 1361~~

In previous legislative sessions the MDHA has work with Rep Mastraccio to expand the dental hygienist scope of practice to provide greater preventive services for the public. Having licensed dental hygienists in the schools providing preventive services, dental screenings and referrals for urgent care is a key role for public health hygienists.

The community based dental centers like ours cannot keep up with the dental disease that we see every day. Having dental hygienists in the schools is a great service to the community and to the dental clinics.

In Maine in 1995 Public Health Supervision for Dental hygienist was approved by the Dental Board and in 2002 MC allowed DH to bill for preventive services.

Last year when LD 1581 passed it changed the Dental Practice Act to allow Public Health Dental Hygienists to work without direct supervision of a dentist

The issue we are encountering now is MC **requires** any person with both private insurance and MC to **Bill the private Insurance first. We need to pass this Bill to allow DH to Bill Commercial Insurance in addition to MC.**

You may have heard how difficult it is to find private dental offices that will take Dental Insurance and MC. So referring children to private offices does not work.

Preventive dental care in the schools is one of the most effective ways to stop decay and do early dental referrals.

Actually Dr Alfred Fones opened the first Fones School of Dental Hygiene in 1913 in Bridgeport Connecticut. In 1961 Westbrook Jr College opened the first DH Program in Portland Maine. In 1973 the UMA opened their DH program on the Bangor campus.

Dental hygienists have been a key member in our community based dental programs.

Thank you for your time and support for LD 1361.

I would be glad to answer questions and attend your work session.

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Local Anesthesia approved

1918 2 women were examined and given certificates to practice under the Dental Hygienist Law

1940 Association established in Maine due to increased membership. MIDHA allowed 2 delegates at ADHA annual meeting

1954 Components established in Maine due to increased membership. MIDHA allowed 2 delegates at ADHA annual meeting

1924 Maine Dental Hygienists Association formed

1925 a bill was passed "two girls can become a hygienist in ME unless she has graduated from a reputable school"

1954 Westbrook Junior College Dental Hygiene Program

1978 Hygienists achieved seat on Dental Board with full voting privileges

1922 MIDHA incorporated. June 1st Annual MIDHA meeting Poland Spring House Dorothy Bryant 1st MIDHA president (editor of the Journal of ADHA)

1951 5000P newsletter developed

1942 The first computer record for a hygienist licensed in Maine

1973 Bangor Community College

1985 Public Health Supervision (PHS) category established to enable hygienists to provide preventive clinical services to the underserved populations

1980 Cindy Turfque 1st Maine Hygienist to serve as President ADHA

2004 Number of hygienists on ME increased to 2. Subcommittees created with 2 hygienists. CE's increase to 30 per two years.

2008 Bill signed allowing Independent Practice of Dental Hygienists (IPDH) effective 2009.

2014 Law (DHT) Creation of Dental Hygiene Therapist

2011 X-ray Pilot Program bill 2-year pilot program allowing IPDH hygienists to process radiographs in underserved areas of the state to project ability to improve access to dental health services in federally designated dental health professional shortage areas

2007 The first nitrous oxide permit issued in Maine

2009 Public Health Supervision (PHS). ADHA can now provide care in WIC, Headstart, pediatric health clinics for the underserved. Mainstays will reimburse hygiene entities directly for preventive services