

## Lou Mansolillo

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**From:** Ashley Soares <ashleycp85@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 13, 2026 3:43 PM  
**To:** House Corporations Committee; Rep. Solomon, Joseph J. Jr.  
**Subject:** Support for H7837 – Expanding Access to Care Through Public Health Dental Hygiene

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Dear Chairman Solomon and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill H7837. As the Immediate Past President of the Rhode Island Dental Hygienists' Association (RIDHA) and a practicing Public Health Dental Hygienist (PHDH), I have seen firsthand the impact that access to preventive oral health services can have on our communities.

H7837 is a critical step forward in improving access to care by allowing dental hygienists to be reimbursed by third-party payors, including Medicare. This change removes a significant barrier that currently limits the ability of PHDHs to sustainably provide care in community-based settings.

Public Health Dental Hygienists are uniquely positioned to serve vulnerable and underserved populations, including older adults, individuals with disabilities, and those in community settings such as schools, nursing homes, and mobile programs. However, without the ability to receive reimbursement from a broader range of insurers, many of these essential services remain underutilized or financially unsustainable.

This legislation supports the expansion of the PHDH model by aligning reimbursement with the existing scope of practice, ultimately allowing hygienists to practice to the full extent of their training. It also strengthens the oral health workforce and helps address gaps in access to care across Rhode Island.

As both a clinician and a leader within RIDHA, I strongly urge you to support H7837. This bill represents an important opportunity to improve access, enhance prevention, and advance equity in oral health care throughout our state.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to provide any additional information or share further insight from my experience in public health dental hygiene.

Sincerely,

Ashley C. Soares

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"All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them."  
-Walt Disney

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