



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
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Peter F. Neronha
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April 30, 2025

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney
Chairman
House Committee on Finance
State House, Room 35
Providence, RI 02903

Re: HB 5736: Dentists and Dental Hygienists

Dear Chairman Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee,

I write today to express my support for HB 5736, legislation that permits reimbursement for public health dental hygienists from any insurance provider or third-party payor such as Medicare. This legislation, sponsored by Representative Caldwell, will ensure that access to vital dental services is expanded throughout the State.

Our state's health care system is in crisis, and dental care is no exception. Many Rhode Islanders face extraordinary barriers accessing dental care – particularly children, the elderly, and people with disabilities. This legislation ensures that public health dental hygienists can seek compensation for their work in non-traditional locations including nursing homes, long-term care facilities, clinics, and mobile dental clinics serving schools. This will allow certified dental hygienists to reach the populations that need care the most, bypassing transportation limitations, mobility issues, and other complexities to providing care in traditional settings. This small change will increase access to dental care services across Rhode Island – and the requirement that public health hygienists practice in a collaborative agreement with licensed dentists ensures that patient care will still be provided at the highest level.

Given that hundreds of thousands of Rhode Islanders rely on third-party payors such as Medicare and other non-Medicaid insurance providers, this legislation is essential to improving the dental health of our population. As always, I would like to thank the Committee for its consideration of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Peter F. Neronha
Attorney General