

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND



Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities & Hospitals

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April 30, 2025

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney, Chair
House Committee on Finance
State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: 2025 – H 5736– An Act Relating To Businesses And Professions -- Dentists And Dental Hygienists

Dear Chair Abney:

I write in support of **H 5736** which permits reimbursement for dental hygienist's from "other insurance" or a third-party payor such as Medicare. We believe this bill offers significant benefits for the vulnerable individuals we serve, the state, and the healthcare system.

This amendment, by including settings like nursing homes, long-term care facilities, clinics, and hospitals as locations for public health hygienists to practice without direct supervision, directly addresses critical barriers to dental care faced by our clients. Many individuals with substance use disorders, mental health conditions, and intellectual and/or developmental disabilities experience challenges accessing traditional dental services due to mobility issues, transportation limitations, and the complexities of their care needs.

The requirement for a collaborative agreement with a licensed dentist ensures patient safety and appropriate consultation.

The Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities & Hospitals (BHDDH) believes this legislation represents a crucial step in improving the oral health and overall well-being of some of Rhode Island's most vulnerable citizens. We urge the Committee's favorable consideration and passage of this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this legislation.

Sincerely,

Richard Leclerc
Director

cc: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Finance
The Honorable Justine A. Caldwell
Nicole McCarty, Esquire, Chief Legal Counsel to the Speaker of the House
Lynne Urbani, Director of House Policy