

From: [RI Dental Hygienists' Association](#)
To: [S Legislation](#)
Subject: Support for Senate Bill 2878 – Expanding Access Through Dental Hygiene Reimbursement
Date: Friday, May 1, 2026 4:25:49 PM

Dear Chairperson and Members of the Senate Committee on Health & Human Services,

On behalf of the Rhode Island Dental Hygienists' Association (RIDHA), I am writing to express strong support for Senate Bill 2878, scheduled for hearing on May 5, 2026. I submit this testimony in my capacity as Immediate Past President of RIDHA and as a practicing Public Health Dental Hygienist (PHDH).

Senate Bill 2878 represents a critical step forward in improving access to oral healthcare across Rhode Island. By permitting reimbursement for dental hygienists through third-party payors, including Medicare, this legislation removes longstanding barriers that have limited the sustainability and expansion of preventive dental services in community-based settings.

Dental hygienists, particularly those licensed as Public Health Dental Hygienists, are uniquely positioned to serve vulnerable and underserved populations, including older adults, individuals with disabilities, and those residing in long-term care facilities or underserved communities. Despite having the education, training, and licensure to provide these essential services, current reimbursement limitations significantly restrict the ability to deliver care where it is most needed.

Allowing dental hygienists to be reimbursed directly aligns with their existing scope of practice and supports the broader healthcare system by emphasizing prevention, early intervention, and cost-effective care. Expanding reimbursement opportunities will not only strengthen the oral health workforce but also reduce barriers to care for populations that often experience the greatest disparities in access.

RIDHA strongly believes that this legislation will enhance patient outcomes, promote health equity, and support a more efficient and accessible oral healthcare delivery system in Rhode Island.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to support Senate Bill 2878. Thank you for your time and consideration, and for your continued commitment to improving the health of Rhode Island residents. I would be happy to provide additional information or answer any questions.

Sincerely,
Ashley Soares,

CDA, RDH, PHDH
Immediate Past President
Rhode Island Dental Hygienists' Association