



EXHIBIT 3  
DATE 2/1/05  
HB 2

***Testimony in SUPPORT of MSU – GF Dental Hygiene Program***  
**HOUSE BILL 2**

The Montana Dental Hygienists' Association (MDHA) supports continuation of appropriations for the operational expenses of the dental hygiene program at the Montana State University-Great Falls College of Technology for the fiscal years 2006 and 2007.

In May 2004, the first fourteen students graduated from this program. Their scores on the National Board Exam ranked the College's dental hygiene program as 15<sup>th</sup> among the 243 dental hygiene programs in the United States. Twelve of these graduates are currently employed as dental hygienists in Montana. Future funding of this program is important to maintain a viable workforce for Montana and create more access to care for the underserved.

MDHA advocates the availability and accessibility of quality, cost-effective oral health care for all people. In 2001, Montana's Department of Health and Human Services identified oral health care as the #1 health care crisis in Montana. By virtue of education, licensure and practice, the dental hygienist is an oral health preventative professional who is an integral component to increasing access to care for all populations. Significant contributions for early assessment, education and prevention intervention, provided by the dental hygienist, can ultimately lead to an improvement in the oral health of the public.

The dental hygiene students at MSU-Great Falls College of Technology represent future health care professionals who will have the option to serve the people of Montana in a variety of settings such as schools, health clinics, nursing homes, and other federally funded health programs as well as the traditional private practice setting.

Continued funding for this program will make a difference in access to oral health care for the citizens of Montana.

MDHA asks for your support of this appropriation.

Respectively submitted,

Kathy Ullman, RDH  
MDHA President