



Montana

Dental Hygienists' Association

Legislative Services Division
Economic Affairs Interim Committee
Chairwoman Sharon Stewart Peregoy
PO BOX 201706
Helena, MT 59620-1706
Delivered Electronically on June 18, 2020

Chairwoman Peregoy,

The Montana Dental Hygienists' Association (MDHA) supports the ability and the authority of the Montana Board of Dentistry, per [MCA 37-4-405](#), to identify, by rule, "other public health facilities and programs" in which a Limited Access Permit (LAP) dental hygienist can provide preventive dental hygiene services. In addition, MDHA supports the Department of Labor's recommendation that the Board of Dentistry adopt standards for identifying public schools that would qualify for LAP services based on financial constraints, per 37-4-405.

The Department of Labor recommends a standard of more than 50% of students enrolled in free or reduced lunches. OPI supports the adoption of uniform standards using free and reduced lunch data, with local input from the school district and health authorities.

Adopting standards does not mean a blanket approval of schools. Requests to add a facility/program must go through the normal rulemaking process, including public comment, before such place could be added to [ARM 24.138.509](#). Adopting standards will provide guidance to both school administrators and hygienists who are seeking to add preventive dental hygiene services in a school.

[ARM 24.138.509](#) identifies four schools as additional public health facilities or programs, with the last school approved in 2009. These sites have proven only to be successful in increasing access to care to underserved children.

Across the nation, widespread governmental and organizational support exists for school-based preventive programs by dental hygienists. Support for standard guidelines to identify qualifying schools in Montana includes OPI, DPHHS, Department of Labor, Heart Butte schools, Libby schools, Dr. Laura Larsson of the MSU Nursing Program, American Dental Hygienists' Association, MDHA and numerous LAP dental hygienists.

Please refer this matter back to the Board of Dentistry, where the statutory authority resides. If you would like further information or supporting documentation, please contact us.

Sincerely,

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