



Eric S. Richmond
Director of Legal and Legislative Services – Ohio Dental Association
Interested Party Testimony on House Bill 11
House Health Committee

Chairman Merrin, Vice Chairman Manning, Ranking Member Boyd, and distinguished members of the House Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present written testimony on HB 11 today. My name is Eric Richmond, and I am the Director of Legal and Legislative services for the Ohio Dental Association. As you may know, the ODA is the professional association of dentists in Ohio. We represent 70% of Ohio's practicing dentists with more than 5,000 member dentists across the state.

The oral health of a pregnant woman is something that must be taken very seriously. There are studies that show that periodontal disease is linked to preterm birth and babies with low birth weights. The Ohio Dental Association wants to ensure that dentists throughout Ohio are doing whatever they can to combat this issue. This bill is a great way to look at prenatal health as a whole and specifically prenatal oral health. The extra oral health care and education that this bill provides for will help pregnant mothers to understand these issues and provide for better prenatal healthcare.

The purpose of this bill and the outcomes that it will provide for are superb, however, we do have some concern with the bill. We are currently working with the bill sponsors to clear up some possible unintended consequences of this bill. As the bill is currently drafted it poses a risk to interfere with the way in which oral healthcare is provided in Ohio. The system we have in place to provide oral healthcare is very effective and we want to ensure that it continues to thrive. As currently drafted the bill would provide for a second provider type in oral healthcare. This would fracture the current model and create many unnecessary issues in oral healthcare.

This bill is providing extra healthcare for one of Ohio's most vulnerable populations. We are fully in support of advanced prenatal healthcare we just want to make sure that the delivery of that healthcare is at the highest possible level. The way to ensure that the delivery is at the highest possible level is to leave the delivery system unchanged. In working with the bill sponsors we feel that we will be able to achieve that goal.

Thank you again for allowing me to provide written testimony and we look forward to working with the legislature to ensure that this important legislation is put into place while providing the best oral healthcare for Ohioans.