



**Senate Health Committee
Shannon Sweeney, RDH
President, Ohio Dental Hygienists' Association
HB 110 - Proponent Testimony
May 6, 2021**

Chairman Huffman, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Antonio and members of the Senate Health Committee, thank you for allowing me to provide comments on behalf of the Ohio Dental Hygienists' Association (ODHA) in support of the funding in HB 110 for the Ohio Dental Hygienist Loan Repayment Program (ODHLRP)

ODHA was involved in the passage of the legislation, HB 463 of the 130th General Assembly, that first established the ODHLRP to help dental hygienists with their student debt while at the same time assist in recruiting and retaining dental hygienists in underserved areas of Ohio.

As you may be aware, many Ohioans lack access to oral health care. A high need of dental care in Appalachian and urban areas of the state combined with a limited number of dentists that accept Medicaid in those areas, has contributed to the access of care problem. The ODHLRP helps address this problem by requiring individuals seeking to participate in the program to serve areas determined to be dental health resource shortage areas.

Similar to the current program for dentists, the ODHLRP is funded through surcharges on our licenses. The funding, which is administered through the Ohio Department of Health, is used to repay student loans taken by dental hygienists who commit to work in a region of the state identified as a dental health resource shortage area. We at ODHA hope to continue to promote the ODHLRP as a way to assist dental hygienists and also aid those underserved Ohioans in need of dental care.

Thank you for considering this testimony in support of the ODHLRP funding in HB 110. We urge the Senate's support.