

**Proponent Testimony Senate Bill 40
Ohio House Health Provider Services Committee
December 12, 2023**

**David J. Owsiany, J.D. (Pronounced “O-Shaw-nee”)
Executive Director
Ohio Dental Association**

Chair Cutrona, Vice-Chair Gross, Ranking Member Somani, and members of the House Health Provider Services Committee-

Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on Senate Bill 40, which upon enactment would join Ohio to the Dentist and Dental Hygienist Licensure Compact.

My name is David Owsiany. I am the Executive Director of the Ohio Dental Association. As many of you know, the ODA is the professional association of dentists in Ohio. We have more than 5,000 member dentists across the state.

I am particularly pleased to testify in support of Senate Bill 40 because it advances a cause that the ODA has long supported. For more than three decades, the ODA has advocated for dental licensure reciprocity and portability. In fact, in 1994, the ODA hosted a national symposium on dental licensure reform that included leaders from organized dentistry, dental schools, dental licensing agencies and others. The goal of the symposium was to create momentum for reforming the dental licensure system in America. A series of recommendations emerged from that symposium including urging dental boards to eliminate artificial barriers that prevent dentists from securing licenses when they move from one state to another.

For example, states have traditionally required dental school graduates to complete a clinical licensing exam to be eligible for licensure. Those exams have generally been based on region for no particular reason. Back in the 1990s and early 2000s, the Ohio State Dental Board would only accept the results of the North East Regional Board exam for licensure purposes. So, for example, if a recent dental school graduate in California passed the Western Regional Board Dental Exam and then his or her spouse got transferred to Ohio, that dentist coming from California could not easily get licensed in Ohio because he or she did not pass the North East Regional Board Exam.

That policy of the Ohio State Dental Board back then was a real barrier to freedom of movement for dentists. The ODA took action to remedy that situation in 2003 by advocating for legislation that would require the Ohio State Dental Board to accept the results of all regional clinical exams for initial licensure.

The 125th General Assembly enacted Senate Bill 51 and it was signed into law by then Governor Bob Taft, making Ohio one of the first states to pass legislation requiring the state dental board to accept all

regional clinical exams. Ohio's law became a model for other states in promoting licensure portability and freedom of movement.

The momentum for dental licensure reform has continued in Ohio. For decades, the exams accepted by the Ohio State Dental Board required dental licensure candidates to perform procedures on live patients. Using human subjects for one-shot, high stakes clinical licensing exams is very problematic. Many commentators have questioned the ethics of using human subjects in order to test candidates' competency. Moreover, since no two humans are identical, it is impossible to standardize human subjects anatomically, physiologically, pathologically, and psychologically so the use of human subjects in such testing is inherently unreliable.

For many years, the ODA advocated for clinical exams that use manikins instead of human subjects, but the Ohio State Dental Board resisted this approach – until COVID. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit and many dental facilities were restricted in their clinical offerings, it became problematic for recent dental school graduates who were not able to perform procedures on live patients for their clinical licensing exams so they would not be eligible for licensure. In response, the Ohio State Dental Board began accepting the results of manikin exams being offered by regional clinical testing agencies. Not surprisingly, the experience has been positive for all involved and now the Ohio State Dental Board understands the value of the manikin exams and continues to accept those results.

We believe this is another positive step in the continuing momentum of dental licensure reform and appreciate that the Ohio State Dental Board was open to challenging their status quo, resulting in licensing process that is now more fair, ethical, and responsible than ever before.

Additional mechanisms for clinical competency continue to emerge in dentistry. For example, the Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) which is a multi-station assessment designed to measure specific clinical skills, including diagnosis, interpretation and treatment planning is now accepted in certain states as a clinical testing tool. Another approach is granting licensure by portfolio – where an independent analysis is done on the portfolio of a student's work while in dental school including measuring competency in specific areas of providing dental care.

Both of these methods have been found to be valid and reliable in determining competency in clinical skills while avoiding the practical and ethical pitfalls of using live patients in a one shot, high stakes clinical exam. These new competency assessment approaches challenge the status quo and are good for the dental profession and the public.

I share this background and history in order to put Senate Bill 40 in the overall context of dental licensure reform. Ohio has been a leader in promoting dental licensure reform and especially in promoting licensure reciprocity and portability for many years. Senate Bill 40 is the next crucial and logical step for dental licensure reform in Ohio.

Like Ohio has already done by joining the Medical Licensure Compact and the Nurse Licensure Compact, Senate Bill 40 will have Ohio join the Dentist and Dental Hygienist Licensure Compact.

In 2021, the Council of State Governments partnered with the U.S. Department of Defense, the American Dental Association, and the American Dental Hygienists' Association to develop a compact to support the mobility of licensed dentists and dental hygienists. The compact language was released in late 2022 and will create reciprocity among participating states and will reduce the barriers to license portability.

On behalf of the ODA, I urge you to support Senate Bill 40, making Ohio one of the first states to join the Dentist and Dental Hygienist Licensure Compact and continuing Ohio's ongoing role as a leader in dental licensure reform and reciprocity.

Thank you for this opportunity to present testimony in favor of Senate Bill 40. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.