

Interested Party Testimony
SB40
House Health Provider Services Committee
February 6, 2024

Chair Cutrona, Vice Chair Gross, Ranking Member Somani, and members of the House Health Provider Services Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide interested party testimony for SB40, which upon enactment would pave the way for Ohio to join the Dentist and Dental Hygienist Licensure Compact.

My name is Marla Morse, and I am the Executive Director of Oral Health Ohio, a statewide coalition of partners who advocate for and educate to improve the state's oral and overall health. Our work impacts Ohioans who face the greatest oral health disparities, which includes the poor of all ages, communities of color, those living in rural communities, persons with a disability, older adults, and veterans.

From infancy to older adulthood, oral health affects a person's overall health and well-being. Poor oral health impacts a person's ability to learn, to engage in social relationships, to gain employment, and complicates management of many chronic conditions. We look forward to a future where all Ohioans have optimal oral health, a vision that will be reached only when there is sufficient access to oral health care. One way to possibly increase access to oral health care is through passage of SB40, enabling Ohio to enter the Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact.

SB40 has the opportunity to attract more dentists and hygienists to Ohio, especially to underserved areas, and could simplify the licensing process for them without undermining competency in skills and knowledge. Ohio has been a leader in promoting licensure reciprocity and portability for many years. SB40 seems to be the next logical step for dental licensure reform in Ohio and a modest step towards increasing access to oral health care.

As we have seen in Ohio joining compacts in other disciplines such as the Medical Licensure Compact and the Nurse Licensure Compact, similar increases in access are possible in dentistry. With the introduction of SB40, Ohio is one of the first states considering legislation to join the Dentist and Dental Hygienist Licensure Compact.

Advocating & Educating to Improve Oral Health.



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Oral Health Ohio appreciates Rep. Cutrona's leadership on this issue, as reducing barriers to practicing dentistry and dental hygiene in our state can help increase access to care for many Ohioans. I thank you for this opportunity to submit interested party testimony for this important bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marla Morse" with a horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Marla Morse
Executive Director
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