



**House Bill 96
Interested Party Testimony
Senate Finance Committee
June 5, 2025**

Chairman Cirino, Vice Chair Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer interested party comments on House Bill 96, the main operating budget. My name is Ann Naber, RDH and I am a past-President of the Ohio Dental Hygienists' Association (ODHA), past-President of the American Dental Hygienists' Association (ADHA), as well the Chair of the ODHA Legislative Committee.

The mission of the Ohio Dental Hygienists' Association is to support dental hygienists through networking, inclusion, and development; to advocate for advancements to secure the profession of dental hygiene; and to promote public access to oral health care. Good oral health is essential for many reasons, but the mouth is the gateway to the body, and maintaining oral hygiene helps prevent cavities, gum disease, and infections which can lead to more serious health issues such as heart disease and the inability to control their diabetes.

For these reasons, ODHA is proud to support many of the oral health programs and appropriations in HB 96, however **we respectfully request that the Senate restore the Children's Dental Services Program in DOHCD22:**

- **SUPPORT the Ohio Department of Health, Ohio Dental Hygienist Loan Repayment Program (ALI 440662)** – \$100,000 in each fiscal year to repay all or part of the student loans taken by eligible individuals who agree to provide dental services in areas determined to have a dental health resource shortage. Dental services must be provided to Medicaid-eligible Ohioans regardless of the person's ability to pay for services. This program is funded by a surcharge on the dental hygienist registration fee (not General Revenue Funding).
- **RESTORE the Ohio Department of Health, Children's Dental Services Program (DOHCD22)** - \$3 million in each fiscal year to establish and administer screenings, treatment, and preventive oral health care for children residing underserved areas. These dental care services may be provided by deploying mobile dental units to schools in underserved areas. In administering the program, ODH is tasked with increasing children's access to dental care and helping to reduce the incidence of dental caries among children.
- **SUPPORT the Ohio Department of Medicaid & Ohio Department of Health, Children's Access to Vision and Dental Services (MCD234)** – At the request of

Medicaid, up to \$4,660,00 in FY 2026 and \$4,295,000 in FY 2027 may be transferred to ODH to support vision and dental programs for low-income children. Of the transferred funds, up to \$2 million in each fiscal year can be used to increase children's access to dental care.

- **SUPPORT the Ohio Department of Health & Ohio Department of Education and Workforce, School-Based Health Centers (DOHCD9)** – Earmarks \$7,500,000 in each fiscal year to be used by ODH, in consultation with DEW, to support school-based health centers in high-need counties.
- **SUPPORT the Ohio Department of Health, FQHC Primary Care Workforce Initiative (DOHCD4)** – Earmarks \$2.7 million in each fiscal year for the Ohio Association of Community Health Centers to administer the FQHC Primary Care Workforce Initiative. Requires the initiative to provide medical, dental, behavioral health, physician assistant, and advanced practice nursing students with clinical rotations through federally qualified health centers.
- **SUPPORT the Ohio State Dental Board** – OSDB regulates nearly 41,000 dentists, dental hygienists, and related dental personnel throughout Ohio, and they are governed by 13 appointed members. As a regulatory agency, OSDB is supported by fees and receives no General Revenue Funding. The Board will be busy in the next two fiscal years implementing SB 40 (135th General Assembly) which entered Ohio into the Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact. The Compact serves to facilitate the interstate practice of dentists and dental hygienists, as well as improve public access to oral health services. ODHA was a committed supporter of SB 40.

As dental hygienists, we understand the importance of good oral health throughout a person's life to promote overall health, and that begins in childhood. Eliminating the Children's Dental Services Program in DOHCD22 only hurts children in underserved areas of the state, and we find these are often the children who need our help the most. The significance that the formative years have on a child's physical, mental, and oral health cannot be understated.

On behalf of the Ohio Dental Hygienists' Association, thank you for your time and attention to these important policies.

Sincerely,

Ann Naber, RDH, BS

Chair, Ohio Dental Hygienists' Association Legislative Committee