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Proponent Testimony on House Bill 184

Health Committee
Ohio House of Representatives
Proponent Testimony
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9:00 A.M.
Room 121

Chairman Huffman and members of the House Health Committee-

Thank you for this opportunity to provide proponent testimony in favor of House Bill 184. My name is Patrick Lloyd. I am dean of the Ohio State University College of Dentistry and I am pleased to add my voice to those who stand in support of House Bill 184.

Addressing access to dental care issues requires a strategic approach that incorporates many different solutions. House Bill 184 builds on many of the strategies currently in place and provides new and innovative approaches as well.

For more than 125 years, our college has embraced its public purpose to educate and train capable and compassionate dentists who will serve Ohioans in general and the state's most vulnerable patients in particular.

For example, our Office of Community Education partners with 32 health care clinics throughout the state to give dental students 50 required days of community-based clinical dental education. This required educational experience helps address access to dental care in federally designated workforce shortage areas. While working under faculty supervision in a community health clinic, as many as 35 students are exposed each day to the special needs of underserved populations, the array of health care delivery models, and the financial models that sustain these systems. As they serve these communities and patients, our students also provide referrals for patients who require advanced dental care at our college.

These community-based education programs provide our dental students with an increased awareness and understanding of the unique oral health care needs of Ohio's underserved populations. Through these experiences, our students are prepared to provide care for such patients in their own dental practices, and it increases the likelihood that they will choose to practice in underserved communities and become Medicaid dental providers after graduation.

We take seriously our responsibility to provide oral health care for all Ohioans, and especially for those Medicaid-eligible patients who have advanced dental needs and

complex health conditions. In 2015, our college provided care for at least one adult Medicaid patient from 84 of Ohio's 88 counties. These patients travel long distances because they need specialized oral health care at specialized facilities like ours which provides services that are not readily available throughout the state.

Our College of Dentistry educates more than 60 percent of Ohio's dentists. Furthermore, our college has committed to increasing its class size by 10 additional students who will be recruited from underserved areas in Ohio. Because of their demographics and other factors, this group will have a greater likelihood of practicing in underserved areas after graduation. However, many of these students will likely need assistance with their tuition expenses as they work to meet their career goals. When fully implemented, this plan will result in 40 new student positions for the college.

The Dental Student Loan and Choose Ohio First Scholarship provisions of House Bill 184 will provide dental students and recent graduates with important assistance that will allow them additional opportunities to provide care in underserved areas consistent with the training they receive at the College of Dentistry.

In addition to training a majority of the state's dentists, the College of Dentistry also trains dental hygienists and expanded function dental assistants. The tele-dentistry provision of House Bill 184 allows for innovative approaches to extending care into under-served settings. Should House Bill 184 pass, we will incorporate these changes into our curriculum so the dentists, hygienists and expanded function dental assistants that we train are fully prepared to participate in these innovative uses of technology when providing care upon graduation.

As I hope you can see, The Ohio State University College of Dentistry is committed to training dentists who are committed to providing care to the underserved. House Bill 184 will help them achieve their goals of providing care in the communities of need in Ohio.

Chairman Huffman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of House Bill 184. This important legislation will further enhance our ability to meet the needs of Ohio's most vulnerable patients in a responsible and effective manner. At the appropriate time, I would be happy to answer any questions.