

Chair Wobbema, Vice Chair Axtman, and honorable members of the Workforce Development Committee,

My name is Tegwyn Brickhouse, I'm a practicing pediatric dentist in Bismarck, ND and serve as the Dental Programs Pathways administrator for Bismarck State College. I am also a member of the North Dakota Dental Association. I write in support of SB2217 and recommend a "do pass" on this bill. I feel the NDBODE has done their due diligence with the proposed updates to the dental practice act. They were clear, transparent, and welcomed any feedback throughout the process. As we work to improve the dental workforce by increasing the numbers of dental assistants and dental hygienists the NDBODE has been responsive by creating pathways to increase training opportunities to meet the needs of the community while keeping our patients safe. The NDBODE's reaction to North Dakota's dental workforce needs has built consensus across provider groups while spending time educating providers on the new October 2024 rule making. This process has been welcoming, transparent, and continually open to feedback. The recent rule changes have allowed BSC to begin the process of creating an accessible dental assistant education program that will increase the number of qualified dental assistants that can support the need of dentists and patients in the community. The NDBODE has been open to providing feedback and review of the curriculum to ensure access and safety for dental professionals and the patients and communities we serve.

As member of the American Dental Association's Council on Scientific Affairs, a section that stands out to me, is the update on page 12 lines 13-22 allowing dentists to participate in the Physicians Health Program. This is a huge step in the right direction. As a dental practitioner and educator for the past 22 years, I have heard countless stories of providers receiving successful mental health treatment allowing them to safely continue practicing. This is more important now than ever with the extra stress many of us carry due to the immense workforce shortages of dental assistants and dental hygienists our entire state and country are facing.

Lastly, I would like to thank each of you for your commitment to our great state and thank you for your service and dedication to making ND even better. I ask you to support SB2217 with a Do Pass

Sincerely,

Tegwyn H. Brickhouse DDS PhD