



Healthy Smiles BY TEMPS LLC

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Testimony regarding Bill SB 2217

My name is Amy Secker, and I am the owner of a staffing agency for the dental profession. Over the years, I have witnessed the extensive time commitment that is for qualified dental professions to obtain their licensure in North Dakota after moving from another state where they practice. This time lag has taken two individuals up to one year to have their license in entirety. I recognize this time lag is somewhat their responsibility, but the current system is rather challenging to work with, requiring professionals to start their application process over if they are still waiting on documents or letters of recommendation and don't meet a time-sensitive deadline. **Ultimately, I am in support of SB 2217 because it promises to streamline the process for the qualified professionals attempting to gain licensure in North Dakota.** Additionally, allowing late renewals honors the time needed for some to process whether they are content in retirement or if they would prefer to maintain their license for a slow step toward retirement. Below, are listed several aspects and what the changes will do for our dental professionals in North Dakota, along with my response in italics:

- Section 9: Allows dental hygienists to administer local anesthetic to those under 18. *Many dental professionals will not take advantage of this, but for those that it benefits, it will make a big difference in how their day flows. Dental hygienists are frequently providing anesthetic for the doctor's restorative patients, and allowing them to provide it for all ages will be very helpful and is within their expertise.*
- Section 17: Provides language that will allow us to draft rules to allow licensees who are physically or mentally impaired, or impaired by substance use, to seek confidential health care and treatment through a Professional Health Program. Physicians, Nurses, and other similar professionals have access to such programs. Allowing dentists to access them will increase the likelihood that more of our licensees will seek out help and remain practice to safely serve their patients—thereby keeping their dental office in place and employing their staff. *Mental health has many limitations in seeking care; let's not allow this to be one of the limiting factors!*

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- Sections 4 and 20: Extends the late-renewal period by allowing those who change their mind about leaving the dental field a full year to renew their license. *Our dental field is losing many professionals to retirement or change of careers, including those who choose to stay home with their children. If they are given an opportunity to renew late, it may prompt some to return to their field or maintain their license, even if just to provide a few days per month of work. The profession will benefit by easing their decision and allowing them to change their mind. We are experiencing a great shortage of dental professionals, so limiting the professional attrition will be a great benefit.*
- Section 22: Clarifies the Board's authority to create a streamlined pathway to licensure for those who hold licenses issued by other states. *As I stated in the opening of this testimony, this is ultimately the biggest change that I see with this bill. I urge you to pass these changes to protect our dental profession!*

Kind regards to you as you make decisions on our behalf. Thank you for all you do!

Amy Secker, RDH BS

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