

Chairman Warrey and Members of the House IBL Committee;

SB 2217 is a comprehensive update to North Dakota's dental regulations (Chapters 43-20 and 43-28 of the Century Code) aimed at addressing workforce shortages, improving operational efficiency for the North Dakota State Board of Dental Examiners, and enhancing patient care.

Key goals of the bill include:

1. **Workforce Development:** Expands the scope of practice for dental assistants and hygienists, creating new licensure pathways and allowing hygienists to administer local anesthetic to minors under specific conditions.
2. **Streamlined Licensure and Volunteer Opportunities:** Simplifies the process for out-of-state professionals to obtain licenses and encourages retired professionals to volunteer in charitable work.
3. **Administrative Modernization:** Updates outdated practices, such as allowing applications to be reviewed continuously rather than at scheduled meetings, and aligns board procedures with open meetings and records laws.
4. **Patient Safety and Support:** Strengthens disciplinary protocols while ensuring that substance use and mental health conditions only result in action if they impact competency. It also provides dentists access to confidential health programs.
5. **Fee Authority and Board Efficiency:** Clarifies fee authority to support administrative costs related to new workforce initiatives and permits the board to impose fines when necessary.

The bill is the result of a two-year process of stakeholder engagement and review. The proposed changes are expected to help alleviate workforce pressures, modernize board operations, and improve patient access to quality dental care.

I appreciate your consideration and respectfully ask for a Do Pass recommendation.

Thanks,

Sean