

Submitter: Courtney Koch

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB3223

As an expanded functions dental assistant, and CDA, I personally oppose HB3223 for so many reasons, starting with patient safety. While I understand that most providers won't willingly allow a new employee to perform Expanded Functions without training and or supervision, there are too many people that may not ask questions. People to simply do what they're told, even though they might not be comfortable yet causing accidents, even after training. There are simple tasks and procedures that cause permanent damage, everyone needs to acknowledge that. The facts are that you've already set aside the need for schooling or a degree of any kind to get a job as a dental assistant, dropping my wage and job security. I went to school to become EFDA. After schooling I took state boards that scared me silly. A couple years later I moved to another state and had to register for said state, I live very close to a state border and have moved back since. Every year, I have taken CE courses, I have paid licensing fees in both states and I have seen people hired off the street and trained to do my job that I worked so hard for. It's personal to say that it hurts each time those coworkers ask me questions, because they're never tough questions, they're the ones you would have learned had you gone to school and the ones that will cause us to bring a patient back because of your mistakes.

Confidence is key, but education gives us that confidence. I can say from my 10 years of experience that dental assisting is the job, you get a new job assisting, you know what you're signing up for. However, each office or clinic runs differently. The systems that office or clinic has in place is the training you receive. As far as dental assisting goes, you're kind of thrown to the wolves. Few providers have the time and patience to show you how to hold and pass an instrument, some don't care as long as they get it in their hands. We are taught so that the instrument doesn't end up in a patient's eye or throat. Don't get me wrong, on the job training is important, mostly because each provider has their own terms and ways of accomplishing the overall procedure.

As the provider I can understand that hiring someone without the education will mean a lower wage, but it also means longer procedure times to get them trained. Now imagine you're the patient, how do you feel that the person sitting above your face with sharp instruments was simply pulled off the street? They took a test, so they know how to prevent diseases, but they don't know where to hold a suction so your cheeks keep getting bruised as your mouth fills with water. We hope they fully understand sterilization, so you don't get infections. These people have been tested, so we hope they remember what symbols mean on small package items, acknowledging a single use bur that might break and be aspirated if used again. Acknowledgment of solutions and where they should and shouldn't be used may be covered material. After trying to remember all the things on the test about all the

things in the office, are you going to remember the one thing in the office that is your job to keep safe, the patient. Do you remember that a patient's vitals and allergies are just as important as the tooth number you're working so hard to remember for the next 20 minutes? A patient's medical history will tell you the story of why they came in to your office in pain, we are to help them through and sooth that pain.

I want to work with other assistants that understand that and work hard every day to know the material, know the procedures and get to know the patients. I definitely want the assistant working on me to be that knowledgeable and helpful assistant. In the last few years I've seen too many assistants hired without experience, with little knowledge. I've seen assistants hired without their radiologic proficiency, putting stress on the other assistants. It takes a team to care for patients, test their education.