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On Behalf Of:
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Equine dentistry is important for a horse's overall wellbeing and health issues arising from dental problems are a common reason that veterinarians will be called out for an examination. I'm a veterinarian and consider myself lucky to have an equine specialty center that is only 4 hours away. This is still a long distance for most horse owners and I have heard numerous times that finding a veterinarian is difficult. Despite the fact that access to equine veterinary care is difficult in many areas, this is not a reason for our state to allow lay dentistry for several reasons:

- 1) Safety: It is impossible to perform a full equine dental examination and float without proper sedatives. These medications are administered intravenously and can be dangerous for the patient when administered improperly. Furthermore, some of these intravenous medications have the potential to be abused and/or are controlled drugs, so they pose a public health risk when not properly handled.
- 2) Inadequate medical care: Veterinarians go through extensive training to gain their licenses. Those performing equine dentistry go through additional training. A lay dentist does not receive the anatomical, physiological, or medical training required to provide adequate dental care. If a dental float is performed incorrectly then a horse may end up with permanently damaged teeth, experience difficulty chewing and eating, infections, etc. These consequences will require a veterinarian's help and sometimes the damage done within the mouth is irreparable. Additionally, many dental conditions are the result of underlying health issues that require a veterinarian to diagnose and treat the condition appropriately. Without a veterinarian to examine and properly treat the mouth and the horse as a whole, the patient will suffer from inadequate medical care.
- 3) Liability: Lay dentists, to my knowledge, do not have appropriate liability coverage in the event that something goes wrong.

At first glance it may seem like allowing lay dentistry will improve access to care for many equine patients but there are numerous health and safety risks that will arise from this. Instead of allowing lay dentistry, our state should look for ways to improve access to necessary equine veterinary care with a licensed professional.