

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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**WRITTEN
TESTIMONY ONLY**

**Testimony in SUPPORT of S.B. 2280 S.D. 1
RELATING TO DENTAL ASSISTANTS.**

SENATOR ROSALYN H. BAKER, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION
Hearing Date: 2/22/2022 Room Number: CR 229 & Via
Videoconference

1 **Fiscal Implications:** None

2 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health supports S.B. 2280, S.D.1, which allows
3 dental assistants to perform limited, essential duties under the general supervision of a dentist in
4 public health settings.

5 The Department agrees with allowing dental assistants to provide limited, but essential dental
6 auxiliary support for dental hygienists under the general supervision of a dentist in a public
7 health setting. This would contribute to the development and sustainability of community-based
8 oral health programs in our State such as the virtual dental home (teledentistry) and school-based
9 dental sealant programs. These programs help to reduce barriers and increase access to dental
10 services for the most vulnerable and underserved populations by providing services in the
11 communities where people live, learn, and socialize.

12 This measure will increase the overall capacity and number of dentists permitted to provide
13 dental services via the community-based oral health models that require general supervision. The
14 collaborative efforts of private sector and public health dentists will help meet the oral health
15 needs in our communities and to improve access to dental care for Hawaii residents.

16 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Testimony of the Board of Dentistry

**Before the
Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection
Tuesday, February 22, 2022
10:00 a.m.
Via Videoconference**

**On the following measure:
S.B 2280 S.D. 1, RELATING TO DENTAL ASSISTANTS**

Chair Baker and Members of the Committee:

My name is Earl Hasegawa, and I am the Chair of the Board of Dentistry (Board).
The Board supports this bill.

The purpose of this bill is to allow dental assistants to perform limited duties under general supervision of a dentist in public health settings.

The Board supports this measure as passage of this bill will allow for increased access to dental care to the most vulnerable and underserved populations in the community. This current draft also includes amendments

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support on this bill.



To: Committee on Health

Hearing Date/Time: Tuesday, February 22, 2022 10:00 AM

Re: Testimony in Support of SB2280

From: Emi Eno Orikasa, DDS, Oral Health Director, Hui No Ke Ola Pono

Aloha Chair Baker, Vice Chair Chang, and members of the Committee,

Hui No Ke Ola Pono supports SB2280 that would allow dental assisting in public health settings under general supervision. Allowing dental assistants to perform limited supportive dental procedures under general supervision would improve access to dental services throughout the state, especially among those that would otherwise not seek or receive dental care.

Hui No Ke Ola Pono has an established Virtual Dental Home (VDH) program that has provided on-site preventive services to Headstart, Early Headstart, WIC, and 2 long-term care facilities on Maui. Most of the VDH patients cannot or will not seek dental care outside of this program. Working with young children or those limited to a wheelchair presents many clinical, behavioral, and ergonomic challenges to a dental hygienist. A dental assistant not only alleviates these challenges but also greatly improves the efficiency of the program. Without a dental assistant, the VDH program is not sustainable.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

Serving the Native Hawaiians on Maui for 25 years



HAWAI'I ORAL HEALTH COALITION

Date: February 22, 2022

To: The Honorable Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
The Honorable Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair

Re: Support for SB 2280 S.D. 1, Relating to Dental Assistants

Hrg: Tuesday, February 22, 2022, at 10:00 am, Conference Room 229 & via Videoconference

The Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition¹, convened by the Hawai'i Public Health Institute, is in **support of SB 2280 S.D. 1** which revises the Dental Practice Act to allow dental assistants to perform limited, essential duties in public health settings under general supervision of a dentist.

Oral health is essential to overall physical, psychological, social, and economic wellbeing. The oral health in our state is a public health crisis, with Hawaii having the highest prevalence of dental caries in children and adults nationally. Almost one quarter of Hawaii's children have untreated tooth decay. More than 60% of children in Hawai'i do not have protective dental sealants and about 71% Hawaii third graders are affected by tooth decay, which is substantially higher than the national average of 51%.²

Oral health disparities are more pronounced among uninsured and low-income families, intellectually and developmentally disabled residents, the elderly, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander populations and those on the Neighbor Islands. Hawai'i is one of only 16 states in which adults on Medicaid are not covered for diagnostic, preventive and restorative care.³ Additional unique factors that contribute to oral health disparities in Hawai'i are geographic isolation, lack of community water fluoridation, low percentage of dentists actively accepting Medicaid patients, ethnically diverse populations, and a lack of a dental school in the state.

There are community-based care delivery programs across the state that are making an attempt to address the overwhelming disparities in oral health, such as school-based dental sealant programs and virtual dental home initiatives, or teledentistry. However, the limited oral health workforce allowed in public health settings has hindered the sustainability and viability of these community-based programs. While the Hawai'i Dental Practice Act allows dental hygienists to practice under general supervision of dentist in a public health setting, no dental auxiliary support can be provided by dental assistants because direct supervision is required. This affects the efficiency and production of the dental hygienists when practicing in a public health setting leading to fewer dental services provided to vulnerable communities. Currently, 17 states allow some tasks to be performed by dental assistants under indirect or general supervision and eight states allow performance of some tasks under indirect or general supervision and do not require licensure, registration, or representation on the Board of Dentistry.⁴

As Hawai'i continues to see poor oral health outcomes among our vulnerable populations, we must continue to enhance our approach to increase access to care and improve delivery of services in our communities. The 2015 Hawai'i Oral Health Key Findings report, by the State Department of Health, provides several recommendations⁵ for consideration and to address oral health disparities and outcomes, including:

- Develop effective, evidence-based community and school-based dental disease prevention programs for all age groups, particularly those who are experiencing oral health disparities.
- Continue to support and expand affordable and accessible preventive dental care services to Hawaii's low-income population.
- Develop strategies to reduce barriers to finding and receiving preventive dental care services for children enrolled in the Medicaid program.
- Explore innovative, evidenced-based strategies to expand access to underserved, high-risk populations, including tele-dentistry.

Each of these recommendations require adequate workforce in order to provide effective oral health care. Allowing dental assistants to perform limited, essential duties in public health settings under the general supervision of a dentist is a meaningful and supported approach to addressing the oral health disparities in Hawai'i.

For these reasons, we respectfully ask you to pass SB 2280 S.D. 1. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,



Patrick Donnelly
Statewide Oral Health Coalition Manager
Hawai'i Public Health Institute

¹ The Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition (HOHC) is community driven and led with fiscal sponsorship from the Hawaii Public Health Institute. Its members represent all Hawai'i islands and diverse sectors across the State. The mission of the Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition is to improve the overall health and wellbeing of all Hawai'i residents by increasing access and equity in oral health care through collaborative partnerships, advocacy, and education.

² Hawaii State Department of Health. Hawaii Smiles 2015. August 2016.

³ Medicaid Adult Dental Benefits Coverage by State. Center for Health Care Strategies, Inc. September 2019.

⁴ The Dental Assistant Workforce in the United States 2015. Oral Health Workforce Research Center. October 2015.

⁵ Hawai'i Oral Health: Key Findings, Hawai'i Department of Health. August 2015.



To: The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
The Honorable Stanley Chang, Vice-Chair
Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Affairs

From: Peggy Mierzwa, Community and Government Relations

HRG: Tuesday, February 22, 2022

RE: **SB2280 SD Relating to Dental Assistants**

AlohaCare appreciates the opportunity to support **SB2280 SD1** Relating to Dental Assistants. This measure would allow dental assistants to operate under the supervision of a dentist in public health settings.

Founded in 1994 by Hawai'i's community health centers, AlohaCare is a community-rooted, non-profit health plan serving 80,000 Medicaid and dual-eligible health plan members on all islands. We are the only health plan in Hawai'i that exclusively serves Medicaid beneficiaries. Our mission is to serve individuals and communities in the true spirit of aloha by ensuring and advocating for access to quality health care for all. We believe that health is about supporting whole-person care.

In Hawai'i there are still disparities to overcome in order for all residents to receive oral health care. In particular, children and adults who rely on Medicaid health insurance are not receiving the oral health care they need. According to "Hawaii Oral Health: Key Findings" vulnerable Hawai'i residents are not receiving preventative oral care, instead treatments are reactive such as tooth extractions and fillings.

Hawai'i has been making great strides in addressing disparities in oral care through community-based care delivered in public settings statewide. These programs include school-based dental sealant programs and virtual dental home initiatives or teledentistry. Even with these great successes, Hawai'i residents, especially on neighbor islands and the rural areas of Oahu, face challenges because of the limits placed on providers in public health settings.

SB2280 SD1 helps to address these limitations by allowing dental assistants to perform limited, essential duties in public health settings.

Mahalo for this opportunity to provide testimony in **support of SB2280 SD1**.



Hawaii Dental Association

To: Senate Committee on Commerce & Consumer Protection
Time/Date: 10:00 a.m. on February 22, 2022
Location: State Capitol via Video Conference
Re: SB 2280, SD1, Relating to Dental Assistants

Aloha Chair Baker, Vice-Chair Chang, and members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Dental Association (HDA) is in support of SB 2280, SD1, Relating to Dental Assistants. This bill allows dental assistants to perform limited duties in public health settings under general supervision of a licensed dentist. For clarity, we suggest specifying that the supervising dentist must be licensed in Hawaii.

HDA is committed to ensuring patient safety and promoting oral health for our community. Among many initiatives, we have been working collaboratively with stakeholder participants in the Hawaii Oral Health Coalition. At the request of advocates from the public health setting, HOHC crafted a preliminary version of this bill. We support and will continue to actively participate in the coalition's public policy efforts.

Oral health is essential for overall health and wellness. One cannot be healthy without a healthy mouth. It can show signs of nutritional deficiencies or general infection. Systemic diseases, those that affect the entire body, may first become apparent because of mouth lesions or other oral problems. This bill seeks to increase access to sufficient dental care, especially those in native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities. The high rate of tooth decay among Hawaii's children, which can lead to pain that interferes with daily activities, is of the highest degree of importance to the Hawaii Dental Association and its members. Untreated cavities also increase the risk of more serious infection in the mouth and body. We welcome an opportunity to engage in dialog on this measure and to serve as a resource to policy makers on oral health.

HDA is a statewide membership organization representing dentists practicing in Hawaii and licensed by the State of Hawaii's Board of Dentistry. HDA members are committed to protecting the oral health and well-being of the people of Hawaii, from keiki to kupuna and everyone in between.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 2280, SD1.

Testimony in Support of SB 2280, SD 1

February 20, 2022

Dear Chair Baker, Vice Chair Chang and Respected Members of the
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION:

The Hawaii Dental Hygienists' Association (HDHA) **SUPPORTS SB 2280, SD1**. This measure attempts to increase access to oral healthcare for Hawaii's underserved and high-risk population by utilizing the basic skills of dental assistants under the general supervision of a licensed dentist in public health settings. This provision could directly benefit Hawaii's underserved, by allowing them to gain improved access to necessary oral health services currently being provided by dental hygienists within the community.

As prevention specialists, dental hygienists understand the importance of preventive dental care services and strive to provide the highest quality treatment in a variety of settings. Allowing dental hygienists working in public health settings to utilize dental assistants; both being under the general supervision of a licensed dentist, would significantly increase the efficiency and capacity of treatment provided to this population.

As the largest association representing Hawaii's licensed dental hygienists', HDHA **SUPPORTS SB 2280, SD1** to address access to care issues by allowing dental assistants to work directly with licensed dental hygienists under general supervision in public health settings. We believe this could be a step in the right direction in helping the underserved to achieve better oral health outcomes within our state.

Thank you for your consideration.



Hawai'i
Children's Action Network Speaks!
Building a unified voice for Hawai'i's children

LATE

To: Senator Baker, Chair
Senator Chang, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

Re: **SB 2280 SD1, relating to dental assistants**
10:00 AM, February 22, 2022

Chair Baker, Vice Chair Chang, and committee members,

On behalf of HCAN Speaks!, thank you for the opportunity to support the intention of the bill and provide suggested amendments. As a member of the Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition, we support increasing access to oral care and understand that increasing capacity of licensed dental hygienist would assist providers working in public health settings. We suggest making the following changes to ensure the intent of the impact is met.

Increasing the workforce in public health settings by allowing dental assistants to provide limited duties will expand care to vulnerable communities.

For these reasons, HCAN Speaks! respectfully requests the Committee to support the measure.

Thank you,

Kathleen Algire
Director of Early Learning and Health Policy

2/22/2022

STRONG SUPPORT FOR SB2280SD1, RELATING TO DENTAL ASSISTANTS

To: Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection
Senator Rosalyn Baker, Chair
Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Berentania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

From: Le‘a Minton, MSN, APRN, CNM, IBCLC

Time: Thirty-First Legislature Regular Session of 2022
Tuesday, February 22, 2022 at 10:00AM

Dear Senator Rosalyn Baker, Senator Chang and committee members:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide strong support on SB2280SD1 relating to dental assistants.

In reviewing the amendments made to SB2280, I see that all requested amendments were implemented. SB2280SD1 is now in alignment with what best ensures increased access to dental health care within public health settings across the State of Hawai‘i and provides full scope practice for dental assistants. It is critical to the health of our community that we remove barriers we inadvertently created in the past, so that we can deliver what we intended to in the first place - accessible healthcare for all communities.

Dental assistants are noted to play an important role in dental health care, and for that I respectfully request that you update the implementation date of SB2280SD1 to “Section 4. This Act shall take effect upon being signed into law.”

Respectfully,

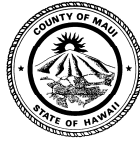
Le‘a Minton, MSN, APRN, CNM, IBCLC

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LATE

TO: Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Tasha Kama
Councilmember

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tasha Kama".

DATE: February 22, 2022

SUBJECT: **Hearing of February 22, 2022; Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 2280 SD 1,
RELATING TO DENTAL ASSISTANTS**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT** of this important measure. The purpose of this measure is to allow dental assistants to perform limited duties under the general supervision of a dentist in public health settings.

I am submitting this testimony as a Maui County Councilmember but not on behalf of the Maui County Council since the Council has not had the opportunity to discuss and take a position on this bill.

I am writing as a caregiver for my adult child with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). Her dental health program under Medicaid according to their website <https://medquest.hawaii.gov/en/members-applicants/quest-integration-coverage/covered-services.html>, is limited to emergency only to relieve pain, eliminate infections or to treat "acute" injuries or to support "structures of the oro-facial complex".

In a nutshell, her dental treatment comes down to extractions only! I personally pay for her dental treatments beyond Medicaid.

It is a well-known fact the State of Hawaii lacks the necessary dental health infrastructure needed to improve this health disparity among native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities on the island of Maui.

Dental assistants could play an important role in improving access to dental health care across the State. This measure allows dental assistants to perform limited duties under the general supervision of a dentist in public health settings, thereby adding to the capacity of the dental health infrastructure to assist those in need.

I urge you to support this measure.