



Testimony submitted to the Joint Committee on Health Care Financing
In Support of S.2076 – An Act establishing an advanced dental hygiene practitioner level of
practice

By Judy Deutsch – LWVMA Health Care Specialist

2/22/16

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts supports S.2076, “An Act establishing an advanced dental hygiene practitioner level of Practice” because:

- it does much to promote quality health care at an affordable price —one of the League’s goals;
- it will alleviate the problem of many, particularly low-income Massachusetts residents being unable to get the dental care they need, and the resulting infections that disastrously affect the rest of their bodies;
- forty-seven percent of young people in MassHealth did not see a dentist in 2014 and fifty-nine percent of seniors in long-term care had untreated dental problems in 2009;
- significant racial, ethnic and socioeconomic disparities exist within all oral health indicators, at each grade level, and among the state’s 14 counties, and children with the most oral disease are the least likely to have received dental sealants — a safe and effective, yet underutilized, preventive measure (according to a 2008 report, “Oral Health of Massachusetts Children,” prepared by the Catalyst Organization, an organization committed to improving oral health);
- having dental care provided by advanced dental hygiene practitioners would not only make more care available, but it would also lower the cost of such care.

In 2009 the Surgeon General of the United States reported that oral health is essential to general health and well being. Furthermore, on December 10, 2015, Representative Carmine Gentile e-mailed me, “Every child and adult deserves excellent dental care. H.249 and S.1118 [the earlier number of the Senate bill], both of which I have co-sponsored, will allow greater success to dental care by enabling advanced dental hygiene practitioners to provide oral health care services in the Commonwealth.”

For all these reasons we urge you to pass this bill favorably out of your Committee, see that it is passed by The General Court, and then see that it is implemented.

Thank you for your consideration.