



Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC)
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MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 31, 2019

TO: The Honorable Members of the Delaware General Assembly

FROM: Ann C. Fisher, Chairperson
GACEC

RE: **Senate Bill No. 81 (License to Practice Dentistry)**

The Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC) has reviewed **Senate Bill No. 81**. This bill proposes to amend Title 24 of the Delaware Code to allow dentists who work for the Division of Public Health to practice under a temporary license. Council **endorses** the proposed legislation. This bill will allow qualified dentists who otherwise would not be able to practice for the Division of Public Health to practice under a temporary license and serve children on Medicaid, who are underserved in terms of dental care.

Delaware Code already allows dentists who practice for Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) to practice under a provisional license, assuming they meet all the rules to do so. A provisional license enables the holder to practice dentistry in Delaware for two years, and it will convert to a full license once the holder passes a practical exam and fulfills other requirements. This bill has the stated goal of facilitating the Division of Public Health's recruitment of dentists to serve those in need. The Division offers dental services to Medicaid-eligible clients under the age of 21 (as well as CHIP-eligible clients under age 19). Although Medicaid benefits for children include dental coverage, a report from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) shows that in 2010, only 44.9% of Medicaid-covered children in Delaware received any type of dental care. One barrier to receiving care is an inadequate number and geographic distribution of dentists who treat Medicaid patients. Low reimbursement rates result in fewer providers willing to serve children who are on Medicaid. SB 81, however, could help increase the availability of dentists for Medicaid-eligible children by making it easier for dental providers who are not yet licensed in the state to work for the Division of Public Health.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration of our endorsement. Please feel free to contact me or Wendy Strauss at the GACEC office should you have any questions.