



**Direct Medicaid Reimbursement for Dental Hygienists  
HB 5676 (Rep. Phelps)/SB 2870 (Sen. Noland)**

**Synopsis:** House Bill 5676/Senate Bill 2870 allows for the direct reimbursement of licensed dental hygienists who treat Medicaid-eligible patients under the state's Medicaid-funded programs. The legislation would also provide direct access to much-needed preventive oral health care services for Illinois residents covered by Medicaid by allowing dental hygienists to provide a specific set of dental hygiene services to patients without the supervision of a dentist.

**IDHA/IFT Position:     **SUPPPORT****

**Rationale:** Direct Medicaid reimbursement, as allowed by HB 5676/SB 2870, would enable dental hygienists to obtain their own Medicaid provider numbers and be directly reimbursed by the state for services rendered. It is important to note:

- Twelve states currently have laws in place that allow for the direct reimbursement of dental hygienists under Medicaid: Minnesota, Wisconsin, Missouri, Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Colorado, New Mexico, Maine, Connecticut, and Montana.
- In the states that allow for direct reimbursement under Medicaid, dental hygienists have been able to treat thousands of patients who would not normally have access to preventive oral health care services.
- Direct reimbursement under Medicaid does not require or allow for a dental hygienist to own or operate a dental practice.
- This legislation is limited to a specific set of preventive services already within the hygienists' scope of practice.

HB 5676/SB 2870 would provide dental hygienists with the opportunity to provide a specific set of preventive oral health care services without the supervision of a dentist, increasing direct access to preventive oral health care in Illinois. HB 5676/SB 2870 does not alter the type or scope of services that dental hygienists are able to provide; it simply lifts supervision requirements for dental hygienists treating Medicaid-eligible patients. The bill makes it possible for dental hygienists to administer services, such as prophylaxis, sealants, and fluoride treatments, in non-traditional settings like schools, long-term care facilities and public health clinics.

Dental hygienists are educated and trained to treat oral diseases while they are still manageable, saving critical health care dollars from being spent on more expensive restorative procedures. HB 5676/SB 2870 would allow dental hygienists to put their skills into practice more effectively, while allocating precious Medicaid funds more efficiently. The bill would facilitate direct access to dental hygiene services to the currently underserved Medicaid-eligible population in Illinois.

In sum, the IDHA believes that HB 5676/SB 2870 is beneficial to the public as well as members of the dental community. As the link between an individual's oral health and overall health continue to emerge, it is important for members of the Illinois General Assembly to take steps needed to increase access to preventive oral health care. The IDHA urges all members of the General Assembly to support HB 5676/SB 2870.