

Executive Summary: Health Impact Review of HB 2321

Concerning Mid-Level Dental Professionals

Evidence indicates that HB 2321 has potential to improve oral health and overall health outcomes, particularly for low-income and communities of color as well as individuals with medical disabilities or chronic conditions. These communities are disproportionately impacted by negative oral and other health impacts; therefore improving health outcomes for these populations would likely decrease health disparities.

BILL INFORMATION

Sponsors: Representatives Cody, Walsh, Jenkins, Green, Pettigrew, Fitzgibbon, Roberts, Pollet

Summary of Bill:

- Creates two new mid-level dental professions: licensed dental practitioners and licensed dental hygiene practitioners.
- Outlines the required qualifications and the scopes of practice for these new professions.
- Mandates that mid-level providers must practice pursuant to a written practice plan contract with a dentist.
- Specifies that mid-level providers can only practice in Federally Qualified Health Centers, clinics operated by accredited schools of dentistry or dental hygiene, clinics operated by a Tribal Health Program or an Urban Indian Organization, or a practice setting where at least 35% of the total patient base of the mid-level provider consists of Medicaid patients, patients with a medical disability/chronic condition that creates a significant barrier to dental care, or patients that do not have dental coverage and have an annual income of less than 133% of the federal poverty level.
- Encourages the American Dental Association and the Washington State Dental Association to study and report to the Legislature on programs in the state that use volunteer dentists and oral surgeons to provide specialty care and explore how these programs can be expanded and financed in underserved areas.

HEALTH IMPACT REVIEW

Summary of Findings:

This review assumes that if the Legislature creates these mid-level professions than individuals will pursue these careers and find employment in Washington.

This health impact review found the following evidence regarding the provisions in HB 2321:

- Strong evidence that having mid-level oral health providers employed in Washington state would increase access to oral healthcare.
- Some evidence that having mid-level oral health providers employed in Washington state would decrease oral healthcare costs.
- Some evidence that decreased costs of oral healthcare would increase access to care.
- Very strong evidence that increased access to oral healthcare would improve oral health outcomes.
- Strong evidence that mid-level dental professionals provide safe, high quality care.
- Very strong evidence that improved oral health outcomes would decrease health disparities.
- Very strong evidence that improved oral health outcomes would improve overall health.
- Very strong evidence that improved overall health would decrease health disparities.

FULL REVIEW

For review methods, logic model, strength-of-evidence analyses, and citations of empirical evidence refer to the full health impact review: <http://sboh.wa.gov/Portals/7/Doc/HealthImpactReviews/HIR-2014-08-HB2321.pdf>

For more information contact:
(360)-236-4106 | hir@sboh.wa.gov
or go to sboh.wa.gov