
April 8, 2021

The Honorable David Chiu
State Capitol
P.O. Box 942829
Sacramento, CA 94249-0017

RE: AB-733 Dental hygienists: registered dental hygienist in alternative practice: scope of practice.
AAP-CA Position: SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Chiu,

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA) representing over 3,000 pediatrician members strongly supports AB 733, as amended on March 18, 2021. This bill allows registered dental hygienists in alternative practices to partner with physicians in medical settings to provide fluoride treatments and oral health education and to coordinate care with dental providers and the dental care system.

The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) recommends that a child go to the dentist by age 1 or within six months after getting their first tooth. However, according to a 2008 report from the California Healthcare Foundation, 24% of all children in California never visit a dentist. Only 48 percent of children and young adults (birth to age 20) insured by Medi-Cal had a dental visit during the 2018 calendar year, as compared to more than 84 percent of children (ages 1 to 19) who had a visit with a physician. Poor dental health can cause cosmetic problems and pain, and may raise the risk of developing more serious health problems later in life, including digestive and cardiac issues.

The Medi-Cal Dental Program covers diagnostic and preventative dental hygiene for children, but accessing that care can be complicated and difficult. Allowing dental hygienists to provide certain types of preventative care and education in conjunction with pediatricians makes oral health care more accessible for patients. Integrating medical and dental care has already been shown to be effective in pilot programs in Sacramento and Los Angeles.

AB 733 would allow medical offices that see children or pregnant individuals with Medi-Cal to include an oral health provider to educate patients on the importance of oral health, provide basic preventive services, and provide referrals to Medi-Cal enrolled dentists.

AAP-CA strongly supports AB 733. Thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of the health and wellbeing of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,



Jacques Corriveau, MD FAAP
Chair, State Government Affairs Committee
American Academy of Pediatrics, California

cc: AAP Leadership