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From: Doctor Sarah Eager <dreager@eagerfamilydentistry.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 11, 2024 2:59 PM
To: House Corporations Committee
Subject: Testimony in Favor of the Fair Share for Dental Care Bill

I wish I could attend today's events with my colleagues but I had an entire afternoon of patients scheduled that would have had to be cancelled and with the difficulty of access to care and long waits for dental appointments, I opted to stay at the office today.

As the President of the Rhode Island Academy of General Dentistry, I would like to lend my and my organization's support to the Rhode Island Dental Association in their efforts to get this bill through the legislature. As a private practice dentist, I would like to share a story with you....

I recently found out that a long time patient of mine was diagnosed with Stage 4 Oral Cancer stemming from a tooth that needed to be extracted back in 2022. I referred him to an oral surgeon for the extraction and possibly a biopsy of abnormal gum tissue because I do not do biopsies in my office. He spent months looking for a surgeon that took his insurance but found none. A year and a half went by with the bad tooth still in his mouth and the cancer growing. He is now receiving chemotherapy and radiation and the prognosis is less than ideal.

The practice of dentistry and the receiving of dental care in Rhode Island is in crisis. The access to care issues in Rhode Island come from a lack of adequate reimbursement, fine print policies in almost every dental plan, and a decline in dentists in our state. We need to pass this bill to encourage dentists to come to Rhode Island to practice and work in-network with dental benefit providers. We also need to make sure that patients are getting the care that they work so hard to pay for each month. We should be doing better for our patients and our citizens!

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