

THE CLERK:

Calendar Page 5, Calendar 584, File 375, Substitute for H. B. 6819, An Act Concerning Access to Oral Healthcare, Favorable Report of the Committee on Public Health and Judiciary.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Murphy.

SEN. MURPHY:

Thank you, Mr. President. I move adoption of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the bill in concurrence of the House.

THE CHAIR:

On acceptance and passage, will you remark? Senator Murphy.

SEN. MURPHY:

Thank you very much, Mr. President. Last year, the Public Health Committee was confronted with the task of rewriting our licensing statutes, in regard to the practice of dentistry and the practice for dental hygienists in this state.

It was the wisdom of the Public Health Committee, given the nature and scope of that task, to empower a group of professionals to meet during the interim, to discuss these changes and to reach a compromise by all interested parties.

We are lucky today to have before us the product of that working group that met over the interim, exhaustively, to write this new definition of dentistry, and to expand the practice of dentistry, as well as that of dental hygienists, in order not only to update our statutes on this issue, but to expand access to many people in this state who have been so sorely lacking dental care over the past several years.

THE CHAIR:

Senator, excuse me for just a moment.

[GAVEL]

It's getting a little noisy in the Chamber. Thank you. Senator Murphy.

SEN. MURPHY:

Thank you, Mr. President. This makes a number of various changes. First, as I mentioned, it, for the first time in decades, updates the very nature of the definition of dentistry. It provides for continuing education for dentists.

It allows for very limited licensure of foreign-trained dentists in this state. And it also allows for dental hygienists to practice some limited form of anesthesiology within a supervised setting.

I think this is a very positive step forward for the practice of dentistry, the product of long, long hours by a number of people, including those in the Department of Public Health, and I would urge its passage today.

THE CHAIR:

Will you remark further? Senator McKinney.

SEN. MCKINNEY:

Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I rise in support of the bill. And through you, Mr. President, for purposes of legislative intent, I would like to ask a question of the proponent of the bill.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, Senator McKinney.

SEN. MCKINNEY:

Thank you, Mr. President. Senator Murphy, on Lines 191 and 192 of the bill, the last phrase talks about, and I'll quote, it says, procedures, to the extent that such surgery or procedures are associated with trauma.

My question, through you, Mr. President, for purposes of legislative intent, does that phrase, to the extent that such surgery or procedures are associated with trauma, is that phrase, does that phrase only modify subsection D, dealing with frontal and orbital surgery, through you, Mr. President?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Murphy.

SEN. MURPHY:

Yes, it does. It only pertains to that last section D, and not to the sub A, B, and C beforehand.

THE CHAIR:

Senator McKinney.

SEN. MCKINNEY:

Thank you very much, Senator Murphy.

THE CHAIR:

Will you remark further on the bill? Will you remark further? Senator Slossberg.

SEN. SLOSSBERG:

Thank you, and good afternoon, Mr. President. Just another couple of questions for legislative intent, through you.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, Senator.

SEN. SLOSSBERG:

Yes. Senator Murphy, Section 5 of this bill would allow for the licensure of foreign-trained dentists who meet several requirements, one of which would be the completion of two years of residency or fellowship training in a community or school-based health center.

Do these community or school-based health centers need to be accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Murphy.

SEN. MURPHY:

Thank you, and thank you for that question and the few to follow that will clarify some of the intent of the bill.

The answer is, no, the health centers are not accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation, but the residency or fellowship training programs must be accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation and must be offered through an accredited dental school is the answer to your question.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slossberg.

SEN. SLOSSBERG:

Thank you, Mr. President. Is the intent of this legislation to allow licensed dentists, who have appropriate training, but who do not have hospital privileges, to harvest donor tissue from within the oral cavity or jaws?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Murphy.

SEN. MURPHY:

Thank you. Again, through you, Mr. President, yes, hospital privileges would be required when the donor tissue is harvested from distant sites outside of the oral cavity or jaws by a dentist who shall have completed a accredited post-doctoral residency program in the specialty area in which that particular dentist practices.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slossberg.

SEN. SLOSSBERG:

Thank you, Mr. President. Is it the intention of this legislation that

drawing blood for use in the oral cavity or maxillofacial area is considered harvesting donor tissue?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Murphy.

SEN. MURPHY:

Thank you. Through you, no, the section does not pertain to the use of blood or to blood products, through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slossberg.

SEN. SLOSSBERG:

Yes, one final question. Thank you, Mr. President. For the purpose of this legislation, is the lip and its vermilion border considered part of the oral cavity and its contents?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Murphy.

SEN. MURPHY:

Thank you, Mr. President. Yes, the lip and the vermilion border are considered part of the oral cavity and its contents.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slossberg.

SEN. SLOSSBERG:

Thank you, Mr. President. That would be all.

THE CHAIR:

Will you remark further on the bill? Senator Gunther.

SEN. GUNTHER:

Mr. President, I rise to support the bill. I'm happy to see this type of a precedence that is being established, apparently only for professionals that have their, are in the healing arts classification.

Time after time, I get up here. We have adjusted the Practice Acts of the APRNs, the PAs, the PTs, and, in fact, we've even taken a podiatric surgical bill and put it into a study.

Yet, with all these other ancillary services, all we wait for is the pressure of a session, a law being in that type of thing, and we keep extending the scope of their practice.

So I wish that we could set a precedent some time, where we might get all these other categories of health services, and get them through the process of sitting down with the professionals that they work with, rather than coming up here during a session.

So this, I think, is a good idea. It's unfortunate we haven't done it with others.

THE CHAIR:

Will you remark further? Senator Cook.

SEN. COOK:

Thank you very much, Mr. President. Good afternoon to you. I rise to let the Circle know that I will support the bill now, but I have to share with the Circle that a very highly respected dentist from our region is very concerned about the foreign dentistry accreditation piece.

And I will be working with the Commissioner of Public Health and with the Chairman of the Committee to make sure that those accreditations are as fully stringent as we wish them to be.

If it had not been for the concerns of this dentist, who also runs clinics in Haiti, who is very well-known, and you might have read about him in the newspapers about bringing a young lady from Haiti, who had a very unusual congenital situation in her palate, and they brought her up here for the surgery, to be paid for, donated by the doctors and dentists in our region, I might not have been as concerned.

But this man knows what he's doing, and he has expressed grave concern about the recertification of foreign-trained dentists.

And so I think we've, the good in the bill outweighs the concern, but I do want to let my colleagues know that we are going to pursue the concern and see if we can resolve it within the Department of Public Health. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Will you remark further on the bill? Will you remark further? Senator Murphy.

SEN. MURPHY:

Thank you, Mr. President. If there are no more comments and there is not objection, I'd move this item to the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Without objection, the item will be placed on the Consent Calendar. Mr. Clerk.