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**SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6419**

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**State of Washington**

**59th Legislature**

**2006 Regular Session**

**By** Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Thibaudeau, Deccio, Kastama, Benson, Keiser and McAuliffe)

READ FIRST TIME 02/03/06.

1       AN ACT Relating to pilot projects for dental hygienists; and  
2       creating new sections.

3       BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4       NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature recognizes that access to  
5       preventive oral health care services by citizens of Washington state is  
6       currently restricted by regulatory, financial, and geographic barriers.  
7       The legislature finds that many citizens unnecessarily suffer from  
8       dental disease. Access to preventive oral health care services can  
9       reverse dental disease in many cases, thereby significantly reducing  
10      costs of providing oral health care services. The legislature further  
11      finds that dental hygienists licensed in Washington state have been  
12      providing preventive oral health care services without the supervision  
13      of a dentist to the most medically fragile patients in institutional  
14      settings for over twenty years. The legislature also finds that access  
15      to preventive oral health care services can be improved, and that the  
16      cost of these services can be reduced when provided by dental  
17      hygienists practicing independent of dentist supervision. It is the  
18      intent of the legislature to address the problem of access to

1 preventive oral health care services by providing five pilot projects  
2 that allow dental hygienists to practice within the current scope of  
3 practice without the supervision of a dentist.

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The access to preventive care pilot projects  
5 are established. The secretary of health is authorized to create five  
6 pilot projects in dentally underserved areas of the state whereby  
7 dental hygienists are authorized to practice within the current scope  
8 of practice in RCW 18.29.050, without the supervision of a dentist.  
9 These pilot projects are effective for three years after the effective  
10 date of this section. The secretary of health, in consultation with  
11 the dental hygiene examining committee, shall adopt rules to implement  
12 this section, including the designation of dentally underserved areas  
13 of the state.

14 (1) The goals of the pilot projects are to:

15 (a) Open access to preventive oral health care services delivered  
16 by dental hygienists;

17 (b) Collect data of patients treated by dental hygienists,  
18 including age, treatments rendered, insurance coverage, if any, and  
19 patient referral to dentists;

20 (c) Evaluate independently managed dental hygiene practices in  
21 increasing the patient flow to dentists, thereby improving dental care;  
22 and

23 (d) Examine the ways in which the pilot projects affect access to  
24 preventive oral health care for underserved persons. This shall  
25 include a report that (i) determines current levels of child and adult  
26 access to dental care, application of preventive sealants or other  
27 decay preventive measures, and incidence of child dental decay; and  
28 (ii) provides indicators of changes in levels of child and adult access  
29 to dental care, application of preventive sealants or other decay  
30 preventive measures, and incidence of child dental decay as the result  
31 of these pilot programs.

32 (2) The secretary of health, in consultation with the dental  
33 hygiene examining committee, will:

34 (a) Create a registry in which dental hygienists can apply to be a  
35 participant in the pilot projects; and

36 (b) Select the participants of the five pilot projects.

1           (3) The secretary of health, in consultation with the Washington  
2 state dental hygienists' association, shall provide a report to the  
3 legislature by December 1, 2009, evaluating the outcome of the pilot  
4 projects.

5           NEW SECTION.   **Sec. 3.** Dental hygienists participating in the pilot  
6 projects shall not perform injections of anesthetic agents, administer  
7 nitrous oxide, or give a diagnosis for dental treatment.

8           NEW SECTION.   **Sec. 4.** Dental hygienists participating in the pilot  
9 projects shall refer patients seen in these pilot projects to dentists  
10 as needed.

11          NEW SECTION.   **Sec. 5.** The secretary of health shall establish a  
12 task force to recommend ways to improve oral health services to  
13 dentally underserved children and adults in Washington state. The task  
14 force shall provide a report with recommendations to the legislature by  
15 December 1, 2009. Task force membership shall include representation  
16 from the department of health, board of health, Washington state dental  
17 hygienists association, Washington state dental association, and local  
18 health authorities from dentally underserved regions of the state.

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