



September 24, 2018

The Honorable Hank Vapuel
PO Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

Dear Chairman Vapuel:

I am writing today in support of Senate Bill 541. This legislation will help to address the persistent issue of barriers in access to oral health care for Michigan's most vulnerable populations.

The Michigan Primary Care Association (MPCA) is the voice of community health centers that provide primary and preventive health care to more than 700,000 patients in more than 300 rural and urban communities across Michigan. Throughout its nearly 40-year history, MPCA has been a fierce advocate for quality, integrated care for everyone, breaking down barriers in access to health care services, whether they are physical, behavioral, or oral health related.

MPCA's members provide care to everyone, regardless of whether they have insurance, and must be located in and serve residents of federally designated Medically-Underserved Areas and Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs). Without community health centers, many would be forced to look outside their communities for health care or would have no access to care at all. This is especially true when it comes to dental care. Seventy-seven of Michigan's 83 counties – urban and rural alike – have some form of a dental HPSA.

In 2017, MPCA's members provided more than a half million appointments for dental services to more than 217,000 Michigan residents – a 25 percent increase since 2013. Despite this robust safety net of dental professionals, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services reports that only 27 percent of Michigan adults over the age of 21 on Medicaid had a dental visit in 2015. The data is unequivocal – Michigan faces a shortage of dentists who will see the state's most vulnerable patients, and the demand for dental services far exceeds the supply of practitioners willing to treat them.

Michigan health centers gladly provide dental care to more and more people each year, but it is an ongoing challenge to recruit the dentists needed to meet the oral health care demands of their communities. Senate Bill 541 will increase the pool of providers able to complete many of the routine preventive and restorative procedures our members' patients require, which will help alleviate recruitment issues and address the gaps in access to dental care in underserved populations.

In an environment of health care reform, where we are looking for more effective ways to limit costs and increase the quality of services, we need to consider evidenced-based models of care that accomplish these objectives. Michigan should move to accept dental therapists as part of the dental care team to ensure more people have access to quality dental care.

Sincerely,

Loretta V. Bush, MSHA
Chief Executive Officer



Heart of the City Health Center
Administration

100 Cherry Street SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
616.965.8200
cherryhealth.org

TO: THE HONORABLE JULIE CALLEY
SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR SENATE BILL 541
DATE: OCTOBER 2, 2018

Representative Calley,

I am writing you today requesting your support for Senate Bill 541, legislation to introduce dental therapists in Michigan. Cherry Health serves more than 68,000 residents throughout Kent, Montcalm, and Barry counties. In 2017, Cherry Health provided 86,616 dental appointments to 35,599 patients. Despite our robust dental clinic operations, we still have more patients than we can provide care and we need options to increase our dental workforce capacity, including the option to expanding our practice through utilizing dental therapists. According to our recent survey, there are approximately 245,168 low income patients, who have unmet dental needs across 9 counties in Michigan.

Cherry Health is encouraged that the House Committee on Health Policy is exploring options to address the access to oral health care issue and Senate Bill 541 is a critical step to improve access to dental care and create a true dental home for hundreds of thousands of Michiganders.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tasha Blackmon".

Tasha Blackmon
Chief Executive Officer
Cherry Health



Heart of the City Health Center
Administration

100 Cherry Street SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
616.965.8200
cherryhealth.org

TO: THE HONORABLE WINNIE BROOKS
SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR SENATE BILL 541
DATE: OCTOBER 2, 2018

Vice Chairwoman Brinks,

I am writing you today requesting your support for Senate Bill 541, legislation to introduce dental therapists in Michigan. Cherry Health serves more than 68,000 residents throughout Kent, Montcalm, and Barry counties. In 2017, Cherry Health provided 86,616 dental appointments to 35,599 patients. Despite our robust dental clinic operations, we still have more patients than we can provide care and we need options to increase our dental workforce capacity, including the option to expanding our practice through utilizing dental therapists. According to our recent survey, there are approximately 245,168 low income patients, who have unmet dental needs across 9 counties in Michigan.

Cherry Health is encouraged that the House Committee on Health Policy is exploring options to address the access to oral health care issue and Senate Bill 541 is a critical step to improve access to dental care and create a true dental home for hundreds of thousands of Michiganders.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tasha Blackmon".

Tasha Blackmon
Chief Executive Officer
Cherry Health



**Representative Bronna Kahle
District 57
N-991 House Office Building
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909**

Dear Representative Kahle:

I am writing you today requesting your support for Senate Bill 541, legislation to introduce dental therapists in Michigan. Family Medical Center of Michigan (FMC) serves more than 20,000 residents throughout Monroe and Lenawee counties. In 2017, FMC provided 17,802 dental appointments to 6,069 patients in its dental units in Adrian, Temperance and Carleton.

Despite our robust dental clinic operations, we still have more patients than we can provide care for and we need options to increase our dental workforce capacity, including the option to expanding our practice through utilizing dental therapists. At our Adrian Center the waiting time to get a dental appointment is 7 weeks for a new patient and 6 weeks for a follow-up appointment. The basic reason for the lengthy waiting time is that the Adrian Center lacks dentists. We have had a dentist position open at the Adrian Center for almost 11 months. Many community health centers, especially in rural areas, have found it very difficult recruiting dentists to work in their dental units.

We can understand that some dentists feeling "threatened" by this newly created dental therapist position but, for an organization like ours, we can definitely see it as being beneficial. We can increase our encounters to the under-served dental population while keeping the costs lower by employing a mix of dentists and dental therapists.

FMC is encouraged that the House Committee on Health Policy is exploring options to address the access to oral health care issue and Senate Bill 541 is a critical step to improve access to dental care and create a true dental home for hundreds of thousands of Michiganders. In Lenawee County we believe that having the opportunity to employ dental therapists would be god-send to many thousands of Lenawee County residents who desperately need dental care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ed Larkins".

**Ed Larkins
Chief Executive Officer**



Joint Commission
on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations

Representative Jason Sheppard, District 56
N-990 House Office Building, P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Representative Sheppard:

I am writing you today requesting your support for Senate Bill 541, legislation to introduce dental therapists in Michigan. Family Medical Center of Michigan (FMC) serves more than 20,000 residents throughout Monroe and Lenawee counties. In 2017, FMC provided 17,802 dental appointments to 6,069 patients in its dental units in Adrian, Temperance and Carleton.

Despite our robust dental clinic operations, we still have more patients than we can provide care for and we need options to increase our dental workforce capacity, including the option to expanding our practice through utilizing dental therapists. At our Adrian Center, the waiting time to get a dental appointment is 7 weeks for a new patient and 6 weeks for a follow-up appointment. The basic reason for the lengthy waiting time is that the Adrian Center lacks dentists. We have had a dentist position open at the Adrian Center for almost 11 months. Many community health centers, especially in rural areas, have found it very difficult recruiting dentists to work in their dental units.

At our Temperance and Carleton Dental sites, while the waiting time to get an appointment is shorter, we have major problems recruiting Dentists who wish to work in either one of the units. In addition, accessibility to low-income residents for dental services is generally restricted to FMC and the Monroe Dental Department. Each of us and patients would benefit by having dental therapist working with us.

We can understand that some dentists feeling "threatened" by this newly created dental therapist position but, for an organization like ours, we can definitely see it as being beneficial. We can increase our encounters to the under-served dental population while keeping the costs lower by employing a mix of dentists and dental therapists.

FMC is encouraged that the House Committee on Health Policy is exploring options to address the access to oral health care issue and Senate Bill 541 is a critical step to improve access to dental care and create a true dental home for hundreds of thousands of Michiganders. In Monroe and Lenawee County we believe that having the opportunity to employ dental therapists would be god-send to the many thousands of residents in both counties who desperately need dental care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ed Larkins", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Ed Larkins
Chief Executive Officer



Velma Hendershott
President & Chief Executive Officer

October 2, 2018

Administrative Office:

50 Industrial Park Drive
P.O. Box 70
Bangor, MI 49013
(269) 427-7937

Dear Representative Garcia,

RE: SUPPORT FOR SENATE BILL 541

Health Centers:

308 Charles Street
Bangor, MI 49013
(855) 869-6900

I am writing you today requesting your support for Senate Bill 541, legislation to introduce dental therapists in Michigan. InterCare Community Health Network serves more than 44,000 residents throughout Michigan's lakeshore region from Benton Harbor to Holland. In 2017, InterCare provided more than 44,000 dental appointments to 18,219 patients.

800 M-139
Benton Harbor, MI 49022
(855) 869-6900

Despite our robust dental clinic operations, we still have more patients than we can provide care and we need options to increase our dental workforce capacity, including the option to expand our practice through the utilization of dental therapists. In 2017, an average of 25% of adults within our service area were not seen by a dental provider. Although there are never enough providers available to fill the need, the utilization of dental therapist, will increase access to the vulnerable and medically underserved residents and farmworkers within our service area.

Women's Health Center
796 M-139
Benton Harbor, MI 49022
(855) 869-6900

Student Health Center
870 Colfax
Benton Harbor, MI 49022
(269) 605-1277

InterCare is encouraged that the House Committee on Health Policy is exploring options to address the access to oral health care issue and Senate Bill 541 is a critical step to improve access to dental care and create a true dental home for hundreds of thousands of Michiganders.

6270 W. Main Street
P.O. Box 397
Eau Claire, MI 49111
(855) 869-6900

Sincerely,

285 James Street
Holland, MI 49424
(855) 869-6900

Velma Hendershott
Chief Executive Officer
InterCare Community Health Network

5498 109th Avenue
Pullman, MI 49450
(855) 869-6900

540 South State Street
Sparta, MI 49345
(616) 887-3800

This Institution is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer



Isabella Citizens for Health, Inc.

TO: THE HONORABLE ROGER HAUCK

SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR SENATE BILL 541

DATE: OCTOBER 2, 2018

Representative Hauck,

I am writing you today requesting your support for Senate Bill 541, legislation to introduce dental therapists in Michigan. Isabella Citizens for Health serves more than 6,400 residents throughout Isabella county and surrounding communities. Although we currently refer all dental care to other local providers, we believe our patients can best be taken care of if we can open a dental practice at some point in the future. Due to the challenges with recruitment of dentists, the addition of dental therapists could make it more tenable to open a dental practice and meet the needs of our community.

Approximately 35% of our patients and 40% of the children in Isabella County are on Medicaid. Access to dental care for those on Medicaid is extremely limited. Often these individuals are unable to find a local dental provider. Most private dentists either do not accept Medicaid or they only accept a very limited number of patients with this type of coverage. Dental therapists have the potential to increase access to dental care the same way physician assistants have increased access to medical care.

Isabella Citizens for Health is encouraged that the House Committee on Health Policy is exploring options to address the access to oral health care issue and Senate Bill 541 is a critical step to improve access to dental care and create a true dental home for hundreds of thousands of Michiganders.

Sincerely,



Jennifer White
Chief Executive Officer
Isabella Citizens for Health



Administrative Offices
6800 E. 10 Mile Road
Center Line, MI 48015
PH 586.619.9986
FX 586.806.5085

6900 E. 10 Mile Road
Center Line, MI

- Medical -

PH 586.756.7777
FX 586.756.7788

- Dental -

PH 586.467.0980
FX 586.467.0985

- Primary Care
- Dentistry
- Behavioral Health

18 Market Street, Suite C
Mt. Clemens, MI 48043

PH 586.783.2222
FX 586.783.6280

- Primary Care
- Behavioral Health
- Medication Assisted Treatment

43740 N. Groesbeck Hwy
Clinton Township, MI 48036

PH 586.493.0961
FX 586.493.1001

- Primary Care
- Behavioral Health



www.mycarehealthcenter.org

TO: THE HONORABLE REPRESENTATIVE FARRINGTON
SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR SENATE BILL 541
DATE: DECEMBER 4, 2018

Representative Farrington,

I am writing you today requesting your support for Senate Bill 541, legislation to introduce dental therapists in Michigan. MyCare Health Center, serves more than 5,064 residents in our four locations throughout Macomb, Oakland and Wayne Counties. In 2017, MyCare Health Center provided nearly 5,705 dental encounters to 2,039 patients. Despite our robust dental clinic operations, we still have more patients than we can provide care and we need options to increase our dental workforce capacity, including the option to expanding our practice through utilizing dental therapists. Many individuals within our service area are currently without a dental home.

We have had the unfortunate privilege of identifying and providing dental care to individuals that have not received services for 20 plus years due to our integrated medical, dental and behavioral health centers that screen for gaps in care. I would love to give you a tour of our centers where you can observe the need first hand.

MyCare Health Center is encouraged that the Michigan House is exploring options to address the access to oral health care issue and Senate Bill 541 is a critical step to improve access to dental care and create a true dental home for hundreds of thousands of Michiganders.

Sincerely,

Karen Wood
Chief Executive Officer
MyCare Health Center





Administrative Offices
6800 E. 10 Mile Road
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- Primary Care
- Dentistry
- Behavioral Health

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- Behavioral Health
- Medication Assisted Treatment

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Clinton Township, MI 48036

PH 586.493.0961
FX 586.493.1001

- Primary Care
- Behavioral Health

 /MyCareHealthCenter
 @MyCareHealthCenter
 @MyCare_Health

www.mycarehealthcenter.org

TO: THE HONORABLE HORNBERGER
SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR SENATE BILL 541
DATE: DECEMBER 4, 2018

Representative Hornberger,

I am writing you today requesting your support for Senate Bill 541, legislation to introduce dental therapists in Michigan. MyCare Health Center, serves more than 5,064 residents in our four locations throughout Macomb, Oakland and Wayne Counties. In 2017, MyCare Health Center provided nearly 5,705 dental encounters to 2,039 patients. Despite our robust dental clinic operations, we still have more patients than we can provide care and we need options to increase our dental workforce capacity, including the option to expanding our practice through utilizing dental therapists. Many individuals within our service area are currently without a dental home.

We have had the unfortunate privilege of identifying and providing dental care to individuals that have not received services for 20 plus years due to our integrated medical, dental and behavioral health centers that screen for gaps in care. I would love to give you a tour of our centers where you can observe the need first hand.

MyCare Health Center is encouraged that the Michigan House is exploring options to address the access to oral health care issue and Senate Bill 541 is a critical step to improve access to dental care and create a true dental home for hundreds of thousands of Michiganders.

Sincerely,

Karen Wood
Chief Executive Officer
MyCare Health Center





Administrative Office
461 West Huron, Suite 103 • Pontiac, MI 48341
www.HonorCommunityHealth.org

Phone: 248.724.7600
Fax: 248.724.7447

TO: THE HONORABLE JIM TEDDER
SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR SENATE BILL 541
DATE: DECEMBER 3, 2018

Vice Chairman Tedder,

I am writing you today requesting your support for Senate Bill 541, legislation to introduce dental therapists in Michigan. Honor Community Health (legally Oakland Integrated Healthcare Network) is the largest Federally Qualified Health Center in Oakland County serving more than 23,000 residents since inception in 2012 through 11 locations, including Pontiac, Waterford, and Southfield. In 2017, Honor Community Health provided 7,589 dental appointments to 3,158 patients. Despite our robust dental clinic operations, we still have more patients than we can provide care and we need options to increase our dental workforce capacity, including the option to expanding our practice through utilizing dental therapists. According to our most recent study, over 205,000 adults in the county have not had a dental visit within the last year with no usual source of care.

Due to the expansive area of the county and the extreme lack of quality and reliable transportation services, community members find it difficult to access the care that they need, especially as it comes to dental. We recently started operating a mobile dentistry unit to address some of these issues, but capacity continues to be an issue with our Joslyn Smile Center still on a waitlist and the bus booking up quick due to the lack of Medicaid-accepting providers in Oakland County. The demand for dental services continues to increase while the availability continues to stay stagnant, as well as the increase for emergency same-day services due to a lack of access to preventative care within our service area. As a result, many individuals access local emergency rooms that are inadequate to meet oral health needs.

Recruitment for dental providers that are willing to work within our service area continues to be difficult for health centers throughout Michigan, with the limited scope for dental hygienists and minimal capacity of dentists in our service area. Many individuals present with more than preventative issues but find difficulty gaining access to restorative services due to capacity.

We are encouraged that the House Committee on Health Policy is exploring options to address the access to oral health care issue and Senate Bill 541 is a critical step to improve access to dental care and create a true dental home for hundreds of thousands of Michiganders.

Sincerely,

Debra Brinson, MPA
Chief Executive Officer
Honor Community Health (legally Oakland Integrated Healthcare Network)