



DOUGLAS COUNTY DENTAL CLINIC, INC.

A Non-Profit Community Clinic

Board of Directors

President

Keith Van Horn, DDS

President Elect

Charlotte Marthaler

Secretary

Amy Northrop

Treasurer

Kristen Helling

Members

Sarah Billings, RN, BSN

Donita Bouton, RDH

Lucas Houk

Katherine Illoreta, Pharm D

Chris Koster, MD

Starr Patterson, RDH

Charles Schimmel, J.D.

Galen VanBlaricum, DDS

Executive Director

Julie Branstrom

Dental Director

Dr. Cheryl Biesterfeld, DDS

February 14, 2017

Cheryl Biesterfeld, DDS
Douglas County Dental Clinic, Lawrence, KS
House Bill 2139
House Health and Human Services Committee

Chairman Hawkins and Members of the Committee:

My name is Cheryl Biesterfeld, DDS. I am the Dental Director of the Douglas County Dental Clinic, a private non-profit dental clinic in Lawrence, Kansas. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 2139.

The Douglas County Dental Clinic is a non-profit safety-net dental clinic serving the residents of Douglas County, Kansas. Our mission is to make quality dental care available to underserved populations including the uninsured, low income and Kansas Medicaid beneficiaries. This mission is accomplished by providing reduced fee dental care and oral health education with focus given to the special needs of our patient community.

Our clinic treats patients at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. In 2016 we saw 4,309 individual patients with 8,219 total dental appointments. 31% of our patients are uninsured, and of that population 74% are living at or below the federal poverty level. Uninsured patients at our clinic pay on a sliding fee scale. The fees we charge 74% of our self-pay patients (the lowest fee level) are discounted by 68%. These fees are far from covering the cost of care provided. In 2016 our clinic gave away over \$420,000 in charitable care to uninsured patients.

If we were able to add a dental therapist to our team it would be more cost-effective to provide reduced-fee care to our uninsured population. Our patients often operate in crisis mode, and don't access preventive care because they are unable to afford it. I am aware there are many counties in Kansas that have even more severe access to care issues than Douglas County, and I do think that recruiting dental therapists to those provider shortage areas will improve access to care.

I support dental therapists because they will improve the dental health of the numerous Kansans who are living with untreated disease, dental pain, and infection. Thank you for the opportunity to support House Bill 2139.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Biesterfeld, DDS

2210 Yale Rd. Lawrence, KS 66049

Phone: 785-312-7770 / Fax: 785-312-9447

Website: www.dcdclinic.org • Email: director@dcdclinic.org