

United Way

SUCCESS BY 6™

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Friday, February 10, 2017

Rich Minder

Success By 6 Coalition of Douglas County

House Bill 2139

House Health and Human Services Committee

Chairman Representative Hawkins and Members of the House Health and Human Services Committee:

My name is Rich Minder. I work for Success By 6 Coalition of Douglas County. SB6's mission is to ensure that all Douglas County families of children under six have what they need to successfully parent their young children, thereby fostering positive parent-child relationships and leading to success in school and in life. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 2139.

Douglas County lacks sufficient oral health care services to meet the needs of its citizens, including parents and other caregivers of small children. Douglas County is relatively well off compared to other areas of the state, but is still designated as a dental care workforce shortage area. The dentists in Douglas County compete for an ever-decreasing supply of insured and well-off consumers of oral health care services, while those who cannot afford the cost of either dental insurance or out-of-pocket care suffer sometimes debilitating economic and social consequences.

For example, recently a Douglas County mother of a small child needed dental care that caused her great pain. Her toothache got so bad that it was seriously impacting her ability to work and to care for her child. The dental work she needed could have been provided by a dental therapist. Instead, she and her child wound up in mental health therapy – a situation that could have been avoided if routine, preventive dental care was available.

The dentists with whom I have spoken acknowledge that the time is coming for the innovation of dental therapists into the market. One dentist even said that he sees this innovation as a growth opportunity. We need practical, common sense solutions to the overwhelming shortage of oral health care. Dental therapists are that solution.

Thank you, Chairman Hawkins and members of the Committee, for the opportunity to support House Bill 2139.

Sincerely,

Rich Minder

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