



February 15, 2021

Madam Chair and Committee Members,

I am submitting this testimony in support of House File 838.

This important health control was eliminated in 2010 and we have seen an urgent need for it since. Besides the overall health effects that can be deadly from periodontitis we also favor saving people's natural teeth versus extractions and prosthetics. The following article highlights the need for periodontitis control, especially during Covid. Our Hygienists would applaud the passing of this bill as it will once again allow them to provide complete dental care to our patients.

**Defense against inflammation from gum disease can potentially protect COVID-19 patients against life-threatening respiratory complications.**

This is according to research conducted by oral surgeon Dr Shervin Molayem and published in the *California Dental Association Journal*.

The new study links [gum disease](#) and [COVID-19](#), suggesting the virus is more severe in the presence of inflammation caused by gum disease.

Bacteria in the gums travels through the body and spreads IL-6 protein, a harmful inflammatory. And high levels of IL-6 is a predictor for respiratory failure – carrying a 22 times higher risk for respiratory complications.

**Higher mortality rate**

As a result, the researchers are calling on better periodontal screening and treatment to help combat the spread of the virus.

'Considering the potential impact of poor oral hygiene and periodontitis on respiratory infections and COVID-19, periodontal interventions are important to reduce the burden of oral bacteria and potentially decrease systemic inflammation,' it reads.

Thank you, Madam Chair and Committee Members,

Respectfully submitted, Al Olsen, CEO

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