

February 16, 2021

Rep. Robert Bierman  
579 State Office Building  
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd  
St. Paul, MN 55155



Dear Rep. Bierman,

The Minnesota Dental Hygienists Association thanks you for authoring House File 838 which adds periodontal scaling and root planing back to the covered dental benefits for nonpregnant adults on Medicaid.

Periodontal scaling and root planing is a procedure involving smoothing root surfaces of teeth to remove deposits, toxins, and microorganisms that cause gum disease. These etiologic agents are a leading cause of inflammation and infection in the mouth. Dental hygienists are the oral health professionals who provide this necessary treatment to patients who present with varying degrees of periodontitis, or gum disease involving the loss of bone support for their teeth as well as the destruction of soft tissues. Periodontal scaling and root planing are equally as important in treating gum disease as covered services for arresting and treating tooth decay.

According to decades of research, this nonsurgical, therapeutic service can have lasting effects of arresting disease, creating a better situation for patients to maintain the support of their teeth and improving oral health and overall health. Periodontal disease has been linked to diabetes, heart disease and adverse birth outcomes when left untreated.

Currently the covered services of adult “prophylaxis” and “full mouth debridement” do not achieve the same results. These procedures are either for situations where no gum disease is present or as a preliminary service to allow for diagnosis. Therefore, our adult patients are not able to access the necessary periodontal therapies to treat and prevent advancement of disease. Lack of appropriate care can lead to tooth loss and is likely to result in more costly treatments in the future.

We, along with other oral health organizations and stakeholders, have supported this initiative in the past and will always support its inclusion for patients on public programs. If you have any questions for us, please reach out to our contract lobbyist, Tara Erickson, at [Tara@TGEConsultingmn.com](mailto:Tara@TGEConsultingmn.com)

Respectfully,

Amanda Weyek, President

Minnesota Dental Hygienists Association