

VERMONT LEGAL AID
Long Term Care Ombudsman Project

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Senator Claire Ayer, Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Welfare

Re: S.20

Dear Senator Ayer,

I am writing in support of S.20, a bill to establish and regulate licensed dental practitioners. We support this bill because we believe it will increase long term care residents' access to dental services and thus improve their overall health and quality of life.

A recent study shows that a significant number of nursing home residents in Vermont have poor oral health. Between July of 2013 and January of 2014, the Division of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention at the Department of Health surveyed 342 residents in 20% of Vermont's nursing homes. A copy of the study results is attached.

The study found that among all residents surveyed:

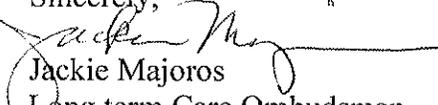
- 41.9% needed dental care
- 8.1% needed urgent care (within 48 hours)
- 33.8% needed care within several weeks)

Among those with residents with teeth, the study found that:

- 48.3% had untreated teeth decay
- 80% had severe gum inflammation
- 70% had substantial oral debris in their mouths
- 57% were in need of gum care.

Federal and state law requires nursing homes to provide routine or emergency dental care or obtain that care from an outside source. We believe that this bill will create a new, flexible, affordable option that will help facilities meet this requirement.

Sincerely,


Jackie Majoros
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