



4<sup>th</sup> Annual Rural Oral Health Conference  
September 11, 2009  
"Improving Rural Oral Health Through  
Innovative Programs"

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## Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**Initiative:** Creation of a public health dental hygienist (Chapter 530 of the Acts of 2008)

**Purpose:** To increase direct access to preventive oral health services for underserved and vulnerable populations

## ◆ Key Features:

- **Collaborative agreement with a licensed dentist**
  - Not responsible for the patient
  - Not responsible for the actions of PH Dental Hygienist
- **Public health setting**
- **Same scope of services as delegated under general supervision**
- **Provide a written referral to a dentist**
- **Direct reimbursement by MassHealth (Medicaid)**

## ◆ Key Features:

- 3 years of full-time clinical experience
- Additional training
- “Patient should obtain a dental examination by a dentist within 90 days”
- May not seek reimbursement from other third party payors, except as provided by federal Medicaid law

◆ **Outcome:** Remains to be seen...

17.2% (482) of dental hygienists interested in becoming directly reimbursed by MassHealth and other third party payors (2007)

◆ **Next Steps/Future Direction:**

- One time grants for PH Dental Hygienists
  - ◆ School-based programs in unserved and underserved communities
  - ◆ Nursing homes
- TA and Guidance