

**Testimony**  
**Health Services Committee**  
**Wednesday, January 8, 2014 – 9:15 a.m.**  
**North Dakota Department of Health**

Good morning, Madam Chair and members of the Health Services Committee. My name is Kimberlie Yineman and I am the Director of the Oral Health Program for the North Dakota Department of Health. I am here today to provide testimony regarding how medical service providers might be available to provide services in areas of the state identified as not having a dental professional.

Physicians, physician assistants and nurse practitioners in clinical settings see and treat a small number of patients with acute dental needs such as tooth aches, abscesses and infection; however, they have limited time, training and equipment to adequately assist dental professionals with all the oral health care needs within a community. Emergency room providers see a larger number of patients that present with acute dental needs, but once again, treatment is limited to dealing with the acute need. Medical/dental collaboration is a priority that North Dakota's Oral Health Program is addressing to increase oral health assessment, prevention and referral that can occur within the medical provider's scope of practice.

The application of fluoride varnish, an effective oral health prevention strategy, is one way medical providers can provide services. Fluoride varnish is inexpensive, easy and quick to apply, and requires minimal training. In addition, the application of fluoride varnish is reimbursed by Medicaid and Healthy Steps. During the 2007 legislative session, HB 1293 was passed allowing physicians, physician assistants, registered nurses, licensed practical nurses and advanced practice registered nurses the ability to apply fluoride varnish upon the completion of a fluoride varnish curriculum approved by the North Dakota Board of Dental Examiners. Allowing medical professionals to apply fluoride varnish creates a wider array of access points in which children and adolescents can receive oral health preventative services; hence this legislation is an important strategy in reducing childhood caries (cavities).

Since 2008, the Oral Health Program has worked with numerous medical providers statewide to train them on the application of fluoride varnish. As a result, many local public health units, clinics and Head Start entities are applying fluoride varnish to children's teeth. Attached is a map identifying North Dakota Dental Health Professional Shortage Areas and the current entities that apply fluoride varnish. The attached map will be used in the upcoming year to target and train medical providers located in dental health professional shortage areas.

This concludes my presentation. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.