

HB 300: An Act establishing a dentist diversion program

Sponsored by Rep. Denise C. Garlick | Currently before the Joint Committee on Health Care Financing (as of August 1, 2023)



About the Bill

The dentist diversion program outlined in this bill provides a **compassionate and proactive approach to supporting the well-being of licensed dental professionals.**

By directing the Board of Registration of Dentistry (BORID) to develop and regulate the implementation of remediation programs for those struggling with illness, substance use, or mental health disorders, the bill seeks to **address the root causes of potential licensure issues rather than resorting to punitive measures.**

Why We're Supporting

This bill promotes a more empathetic and constructive approach to supporting the well-being of dental professionals while safeguarding the public interest and ensuring high-quality patient care. The dentist diversion program offers a path to recovery, reinstatement, and continued contributions to the dental community;

Patient safety and care is always a top priority in the dental profession. This diversion program offers a valuable alternative to traditional disciplinary actions, allowing dental professionals to receive appropriate help in regaining their health and continuing their vital work in the field while minimizing risks to public safety;

Mental health and substance use disorders are often accompanied by stigma, which can discourage dental professionals from seeking help. This bill is positioned to help foster a culture of understanding and support that encourages those who are struggling to seek confidential assistance and treatment without fear of jeopardizing their careers;

Beyond the compassion and support the bill affords dental professionals, the program can also have cost-saving implications for the dental industry. By investing in remediation and rehabilitation programs, the bill's elements are poised to prevent the need for disciplinary actions, costly legal proceedings, and potential replacements for professionals whose licenses are revoked;

Diversion programs as an "alternative to discipline" are widely used in safety-sensitive industries (e.g., medical, legal, aviation). These programs are the gold standard in recovery circles, with success rates 3-4 times higher than that of the general public. Physicians and nurses each have their own long-standing programs — Physicians Health Services Inc. (PHS) and Substance Abuse Recovery Programs (SARP), respectively. Also, pharmacists established their own diversion program roughly five years ago.