



ERIK SEVERSON

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 28TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Testimony on Assembly Bill 408 Assembly Committee on Health

November 13, 2013

I would like to thank the members of the committee for attending this hearing on Assembly Bill 408 (AB 408). I would also like to thank Sen. Harsdorf for her leadership on this important issue.

Under current law, a licensed dental hygienist is permitted to assist in the monitoring of nitrous oxide, commonly known as laughing gas, during a patient procedure. However, only a dentist can administer the gas. AB 408 allows dental hygienists to receive training and a certification to administer nitrous oxide. By allowing the dental hygienist to administer the nitrous oxide, this bill provides for more efficient dental procedures as the dentist does not need to disrupt a procedure in order to adjust the nitrous oxide levels that the dental hygienist was monitoring for him or her.

The bill requires the Dentistry Examining Board to establish rules for the training and education requirements in order to a dental hygienist to receive certification allowing them to administer nitrous oxide.

Currently, thirty states, including Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota, and Michigan, allow dental hygienists to administer nitrous oxide. By preventing dental hygienists from being certified to administer nitrous oxide, when neighboring states do, Wisconsin is at a competitive disadvantage for recruiting and retaining these health care professionals. AB 408 will bring Wisconsin in line with our neighbors and improve the quality of dental care we can provide.

Thank you again Committee Members for taking the time to attend this public hearing and I look forward to working with you on passage of this legislation.



State Senator Sheila Harsdorf

Date: November 13, 2013

To: Assembly Committee on Health

Fr: Senator Sheila Harsdorf

Re: Assembly Bill 408—Dental hygienist's administration of nitrous oxide

Dear Chair Severson and Committee Members,

Thank you for holding a public hearing on Assembly Bill 408 (AB 408), which would allow dental hygienists licensed in Wisconsin to receive training and be certified to administer nitrous oxide. I appreciate the opportunity to speak in support of passage of AB 408.

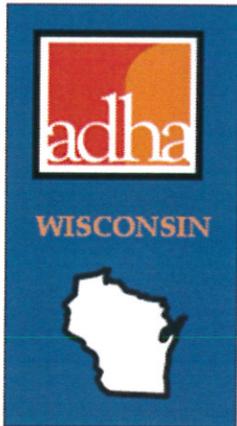
Nitrous oxide (N₂O/O₂), which is commonly referred to as “happy gas” or “laughing gas,” is used for pain management and to help patients relax during dental procedures. The use of nitrous oxide has proven to be a safe dental practice. Patients are not put to sleep with this gas, and the effects of nitrous oxide go away within minutes of stopping the administration of the gas.

Currently in Wisconsin, while dental hygienists are able to assist in monitoring the level of nitrous oxide used during a procedure and its effect on the patient, the actual administration of nitrous oxide must be done by dentists. Since dental hygienists already monitor the use of nitrous oxide, this bill would allow them to be trained to physically adjust the levels of the gas so a dentist would not have to interrupt the dental procedure to do so.

Thirty other states already allow dental hygienists to administer nitrous oxide, including all of our neighboring states—Minnesota, Michigan, Illinois, and Iowa. This legislation would make Wisconsin more appealing to dental hygienists from other states who may be interested in becoming licensed to practice dental hygiene in Wisconsin.

This bill directs the Dentistry Examining Board, under the Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS), to establish by administrative rule the necessary training requirements for a dental hygienist to receive a certificate to administer nitrous oxide. It also instructs the Board to approve certificates to administer nitrous oxide to dental hygienists who successfully completed substantially similar nitrous oxide training in another state.

I urge your support for this legislation in order to increase dental patient care and allow dental hygienists the option of receiving training to administer nitrous oxide. Thank you again for allowing me to speak in favor of the passage of AB 408. I would welcome the opportunity to take questions.



November 13, 2013

WDHA Testimony – Assembly Bill 408

Expanding the Dental Hygiene Scope of Practice to Include Nitrous Oxide Administration to Dental Patients for Pain / Anxiety Management.

Assembly author and sponsors: Severson, Bernier, Bewley, Bies, Kooyenga, Mason, Pridemore, Spiros, Swearingen, Thiesfeldt, Tittl, Wachs, Weatherston, and Wright.

Senate author and sponsors: Harsdorf, Vukmir, Tiffany, Lehman and Grothman

Testifying:

Lisa Bell Wagner, RDH, MPH

WDHA President

Madison

Linda Jorgenson, RDH, BS

WDHA President-Elect

River Falls

Primary reason for this proposal:

Expanding the scope of dental hygiene practice to include the administration of N₂O/O₂ has the potential to increase efficiency, safety and facilitate utilization of dental services.

WDHA Testimony Assembly Bill 408
Assembly Health Committee

- Lisa Wagner, is a licensed dental hygienist and President of the Wisconsin Dental Hygienists' Association
- Assembly Bill 408, a proposal which allows licensed dental hygienists in Wisconsin to become certified in the administration of Nitrous Oxide, if they fulfill the requirements determined by the Dentistry Examining Board.
- Senate companion bill SB 311 was authored by Sheila Harsdorf.
- Nitrous oxide/oxygen (N₂O/O₂) sedation is a safe and effective means of reducing pain and anxiety for patients around the world and has been used in the dental setting since its analgesic properties were discovered in the 1800s.
- Under current Wisconsin law, the only individuals authorized to administer N₂O/O₂ are licensed dentists. By limiting the administration of N₂O/O₂ to licensed dentists only, patient procedures are disrupted when a dentist is pulled away from another procedure to make simple adjustments to N₂O/O₂ levels. This causes inefficiencies and adds to a patient's time in the chair during a dental hygiene procedure when N₂O/O₂ is being used.
- Currently, there are thirty states in the U.S. that allow licensed dental hygienists to administer nitrous oxide, including the neighboring states of Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota, and Michigan.
- The current dental hygiene educational curriculum includes courses which prepare them to merely *monitor* N₂O/O₂ levels in patients during procedures and report fluctuation in the patient's mood and/or behavior back to the dentist.
- An expanded curriculum will include additional training in all aspects of administration of N₂O once a new law is passed.
- AB 408 allows a licensed dental hygienist to obtain additional education and training to become certified in the administration of Nitrous Oxide. The specific requirements for additional education and training will be established through Administrative Rules by the Wisconsin Dentistry Examining Board.
- The WDHA has maintained close communication with the Wisconsin Dental Association throughout the drafting of this proposal in order to seek their input and avoid potential conflicts. Although we certainly cannot and do not want to speak for the WDA, we have been advised by their representatives that they support this Bill as it is presented to you today.
- On behalf of the Wisconsin Dental Hygienists' Association's statewide membership, I ask for your support of AB 408 as it moves through the legislative process.
- Linda Jorgenson is here with me to help answer any questions the committee may have. She is the President-Elect of WDHA, and has taught Nitrous Oxide administration certification courses to dental hygienists in Minnesota.

Thank you.

