



March 4, 2026

Representative Mary Franson, Co-Chair
House Capital Investment Committee

Representative Fue Lee, Co-Chair
House Capital Investment Committee

Dear Chair Franson and Chair Lee,

On behalf of the Minnesota Dental Association and the dentists we represent across the state, please support the University of Minnesota School of Dentistry's capital investment request. Strengthening the School of Dentistry is critical to maintain and grow Minnesota's oral health workforce and protect access to care for patients statewide.

Minnesota is facing a real workforce challenge. More dentists retire each year than are graduating from our state's only dental school. At the same time, practices across Minnesota are struggling to hire dental hygienists. The hygienist shortage is not theoretical. It is affecting day to day operations. Clinics are reducing schedules, booking patients further out, and in some cases turning new patients away because they do not have the staff to meet demand. That strain is felt most in rural and underserved communities, but it is happening everywhere.

Dentistry has changed significantly over the last several decades. Digital workflows, updated equipment, team-based care, and flexible clinical training spaces are now standard. Our state's only dental school should not be trying to prepare the next generation in a building that has not seen a major renovation since the 1970s.

The School of Dentistry continues to produce most Minnesota's practicing dentists and a significant share of our allied dental professionals. It also serves tens of thousands of patients each year, including many who rely on public programs and those with complex care needs. Modernizing the facility will allow the school to expand clinical capacity, improve the training experience, and better support patient care.

This request is not simply about bricks and mortar. It is about workforce, access, and long-term stability for Minnesota's dental delivery system. Investing in the School of Dentistry is an investment in communities across our state and in the patients who depend on timely access to oral health care. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dan Murphy".

Dan Murphy, MPP
Director of Government Affairs
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