April 6, 2021

Rep. Tina Liebling
477 State Office Building
100 Rev Dr Martin Luther King Jr Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Rep Liebling:

The Minnesota Dental Hygienists' Association (MnDHA) is the professional association of dental hygienists in Minnesota. We appreciate the inclusion of Rep. Biermans's HF838 in your omnibus bill. This provision will add periodontal scaling and root planing back to the covered dental benefits for nonpregnant adults on Medicaid.

Periodontal scaling and root planing is a procedure involving smoothing root surfaces of teeth to remove deposits, toxins, and microorganisms that cause gum disease. These etiologic agents are a leading cause of inflammation and infection in the mouth. Dental hygienists are the oral health professionals who provide this necessary treatment to patients who present with varying degrees of periodontitis, or gum disease involving the loss of bone support for their teeth as well as the destruction of soft tissues.

According to decades of research, this nonsurgical, therapeutic service can have lasting effects of arresting disease. It creates a better situation for patients to maintain the support of their teeth and improving oral health and overall health. Periodontal disease has been linked to diabetes, heart disease and adverse birth outcomes when left untreated.

By adding periodontal back into the adult Medicaid benefit set, patients on Medicaid will be able to access the necessary periodontal therapies to treat and prevent advancement of disease. Lack of appropriate care can lead to tooth loss and is likely to result in more costly treatments in the future.

We, along with other oral health organizations and stakeholders, have supported this initiative in the past and appreciate your leadership and willingness to include it in this omnibus bill. If you have any questions for us, please reach out to our contract lobbyist, Tara Erickson, at Tara@TGEConsultingmn.com

Respectfully,

Amanda Weyek, President

Minnesota Dental Hygienists Association