

March 10, 2021

Dear Chair Freiberg and Members of the House Preventive Health Policy Division,

As a member of the Collaborative Dental Hygiene Practice Advisory Committee (CDHP), I am writing in support of H.F.1307. The Committee represents a wide-ranging group of highly experienced oral health professionals who are committed to equitable access to oral health and total body health care.

Despite a wealth of evidence showing a negative effect on oral health, the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages continues to grow. The 2015-2016 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) reported the prevalence of dental caries in both primary and permanent teeth among persons ages 2 to 19 as an astounding 45.8% in the United States¹

The members of this Committee are oral disease prevention advocates whose role includes educating families and individuals about how dental caries (tooth decay) can be prevented. An area of interest is consumption of healthy beverages, most important being optimally fluoridated tap water. The dental profession advocates for consumption of unsweetened beverages which are safe to drink, cost-effective to provide, and equally accessible to Minnesotans.

Societal issues, however, have influenced consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages. These include enticement to purchase sugary beverages—an “I can afford to buy this brand name product” mindset -- in addition to unawareness in society of the maintenance of health when avoiding/eliminating sugary beverages. Sadly, in the case of Flint Michigan and the State of Texas, safe water has been compromised, leading more consumers to purchase “bottled” products that likely are sweetened.

We encourage the House Preventive Health Policy Division to do all it can to reduce the public’s consumption of sugary beverages and thereby reduce dental caries (tooth decay) and increase concern for total body health.

Sincerely,

Clare Larkin

Clare Larkin, RDH MSEd/Oral Health Consultant
Member of the Collaborative Dental Hygiene Practice Advisory Committee

¹ Eagle, I. (2021). Encouraging Sealant Use. Dimensions of Dental Hygiene



Collaborative Dental Hygiene Practice Advisory Group representation:

Minnesota Dental Hygienists' Association; Minnesota Educators of Dental Assistants;
HealthFinders Collaborative; Normandale Community College;
Minnesota Oral Health Coalition; Minnesota Dental Association;
Apple Tree Dental; Minnesota Dental Hygiene Educators' Association;
Herzing University; Children's Dental Services;
MN Department of Human Services/MN Department of Health Oral Health Program;
Minnesota Department of Health Office of Rural Health and Primary Care;
Hennepin Health/HCMC; University of Minnesota-School of Dentistry;