

Support CSHB 3824—Administration of Local Anesthesia by Representative Klick

- CSHB 3824 is the culmination of months of negotiation between the Texas Dental Hygienists' Association (TDHA) and the Texas Dental Association (TDA) and reflects a mutual agreement between the two associations.
- Dental hygienists in 48 states, the District of Columbia and the military can administer local anesthesia and have been doing so safely for decades. The first state to have a law to allow it was Washington in 1971. No state that has allowed hygienists to administer local anesthesia has ever reversed the law.
- TDHA and TDA have agreed via a signed letter to support allowing a change in law that would allow dental hygienists to **administer local anesthesia under the direct supervision of a dentist via infiltration only to patients who are over the age of 18—CSHB 3824 reflects these changes.**
- When treating patients with serious gum disease, anesthesia is necessary in order to provide complete and compassionate care. Currently in Texas, a dentist must administer the anesthesia. This means a dentist must interrupt their patient care which costs valuable office time. Allowing a hygienist who is educated and properly trained in administering local infiltration anesthesia to do the procedure means the practice will run more efficiently and patients will receive better care. The dentist retains direct supervision authority and must delegate the procedure.
- Multitudes of health issues are connected to poor oral health, including heart disease, Alzheimer's, and diabetes, so it is crucial that people maintain care of their teeth and not find themselves in situations of pain or discomfort that makes them stop coming to a dentist's office for care.
- Dental hygienists will be required to take a continuing education course offered by an educational institution accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation of the American Dental Association, in order to be able to administer local anesthesia. The course will also have to be approved by the Texas State Board of Dental Examiners.
- Texas is facing an increasing workforce shortage of dental hygienists—while we don't know for certain that the inability to administer local anesthesia is a root cause of this, we do know that dental hygienists who move here from 48 other states find themselves unable to do all that they have gone to school and trained to do.
- Allowing dental hygienists to administer local infiltration anesthesia is a common sense step Texas should take to increase access to care for adult Texans. The procedure is widely known in health care circles to be safe, and it is possible that this change could have a positive impact on the workforce issues Texas is currently facing.