



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Legislation Formalizing Teledentistry and Allowing Dental Hygienists to Administer Local Anesthesia Ratified by the North Carolina General Assembly

CARY— On July 21, 2021, the North Carolina Legislature voted in final approval of [Senate Bill 146](#), sending the legislation to Governor Cooper’s desk to be signed into law.

The legislation, originally filed as joint bills by Senator Jim Perry and Representative Donny Lambeth, formalizes the practice of teledentistry and allows dental hygienists to administer local anesthesia, among other provisions.

“This is an important step toward a more equitable oral health landscape in North Carolina,” said Dr. Zachary Brian, director of the North Carolina Oral Health Collaborative (NCOHC), a program of the Foundation for Health Leadership & Innovation (FHLI). “Provisions in the legislation — those for teledentistry and for hygienist-administered anesthesia — have long been NCOHC and stakeholder priorities. I am thrilled to also have Federally Qualified Health Centers recognized in statute, as they are a significant contributor to our state’s dental safety-net.”

Brian said that formalizing teledentistry will allow more providers to use remote care technology to reach patients who may otherwise go unserved. He also hopes that having teledentistry language in the state’s Dental Practice Act will encourage insurers — both public and private — to maintain reimbursement strategies for remote care services that were enacted during the pandemic.

“This legislation not only marks a tremendous step forward for North Carolina but underscores just how impactful diverse stakeholder engagement is. We’re appreciative to have had a strong bi-partisan coalition of legislators and are thrilled to see the bill head to Governor Cooper’s desk,” said Dr. Alec Parker, Executive Director of the North Carolina Dental Society.

Authorizing local dental anesthesia administration by dental hygienists has already happened in 44 other states and Washington, D.C. Brian says he hopes this will allow dental offices to increase efficiency, and ultimately offer greater access to care and reduce costs.

“It is always great to see bipartisan support for common-sense health care reform,” said Ben Popkin, political strategist for FHLI. “Those of us at NCOHC and FHLI are proud to have participated in the creation of this legislation.”



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About FHLI's North Carolina Oral Health Collaborative

[The North Carolina Oral Health Collaborative](#) (NCOHC), a program of the Foundation for Health Leadership & Innovation, works to advance systems-level changes, improving the overall health and well-being of all North Carolinians by increasing access and equity in oral health care. NCOHC seeks to influence policy, and through collaboration, listening, and knowledge-sharing, works to provide maximum impact in achieving optimal oral health care for all North Carolina communities.

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