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(FORM UPDATED: 08/11/2010)

WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE ... PUBLIC HEARING - COMMITTEE RECORDS

2011-12

(session year)

Senate

(Assembly, Senate or Joint)

Committee on Agriculture, Forestry, and Higher Education...

COMMITTEE NOTICES ...

- Committee Reports ... **CR**
- Executive Sessions ... **ES**
- Public Hearings ... **PH**

INFORMATION COLLECTED BY COMMITTEE FOR AND AGAINST PROPOSAL

- Appointments ... **Appt** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Clearinghouse Rules ... **CRule** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Hearing Records ... bills and resolutions (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
(**ab** = Assembly Bill) (**ar** = Assembly Resolution) (**ajr** = Assembly Joint Resolution)
(**sb** = Senate Bill) (**sr** = Senate Resolution) (**sjr** = Senate Joint Resolution)
- Miscellaneous ... **Misc**

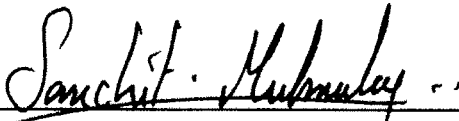
- Lisa Maroney — UW Health
- Mark Grapentine — Wisconsin Medical Society

Registrations for Information Only

- None.

March 15, 2012

Failed to pass pursuant to Senate Joint Resolution 1.



Sanchit Mulmuley
Committee Clerk



TO: Senator Dale Schultz, Chair
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Forestry, and Higher Education

FROM: John Eich, Director
Wisconsin Office of Rural Health

DATE: February 23, 2012

RE: **OPPOSE** Senate Bill 494—Dental Student Grant and Dentist Loan Assistance Program

The Wisconsin Office of Rural Health (WI-ORH), part of the School of Medicine and Public Health at the UW-Madison, has been managing much of the Health Professions Loan Assistance Program (HPLAP) since its inception, as part of a subcontract from the (then) Department of Commerce. In 2009 the entire program was transferred to the Office of Rural Health via Governor's Budget Bill.

The Loan Assistance Program funds six professions - Physicians, Dentists, Physician Assistants, Nurse Practitioners, Certified Nurse Midwives and Dental Hygienists. The annual funding from state and federal sources allows us to make awards to providers serving the neediest parts of the state, by evaluating them on the five criteria set forth in state statute – shortage levels in their region, their likelihood to stay past their mandated period, employer and community support for the provider, per-capita income and geographic distribution of awards.

We have several concerns with SB494; first that it takes almost half the money (47%) from a fund designed for six professions, and awards it to just one profession. There are significant workforce shortages in all of the HPLAP professions, and this does a disservice to the others. Second, by categorizing the funding, it removes the flexibility to make awards to the providers who apply in that year, and who will serve the areas with the greatest shortages. In some years, more dentists apply; in others, more physicians, etc. Our program meets those changing needs. Finally, it more than doubles the administrative costs to the taxpayers, by creating two infrastructures to do one job. The general revenue dollars requested in SB494 to manage the dentist program alone is 30% more than we require to manage the program covering all six professions.

We encourage the Committee to not take further action on this bill. While well intentioned, it negatively impacts other health care professions that the state desperately needs in underserved areas.



Office of Rural Health

Health Professions Loan Assistance Program

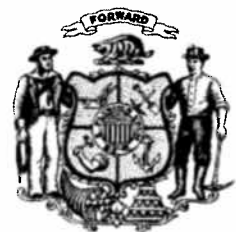
Award Recipients 2007-2012

	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12*	TOTAL
Physicians	6	4	8	10	2	30
Unfunded	(5)	(2)	(0)	(0)	(0)	
Dentists	7	8	2	7	5	29
Unfunded	(1)	(3)	(0)	(0)	(0)	
NPs, PAs, CNMs	4	6	6	4	1	21
Unfunded	(0)	(3)	(0)	(0)	(0)	3
Hygienists (all funded)	0	1	1	0	2	4

*Still accepting applications through June 30, 2012 → HPLAP started in 1990, Dentists/Dental Hygienists added in 2000



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE





SANDY PASCH

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

February 23, 2012

Testimony of Rep. Sandy Pasch

2011 Senate Bill 494 – Dental Loan Forgiveness Reform

Good morning, Chairperson Schultz and members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Forestry and Higher Education. Thank you for taking the time today to hear testimony on this proposal.

We all know the serious negative consequences that lack of access to dental care can have. It can lead to debilitating dental infections that are costly to treat and can contribute to missed work days, unemployment, and repeated trips to hospital emergency rooms. For these reasons, it is in our best interest as a state to ensure that Wisconsinites have access to dental care. One of the biggest barriers to achieving this important goal is disparities in the distribution of dentists throughout Wisconsin; currently we have shortages in many rural and disadvantaged urban areas across the state.

There is no single solution to address this problem, but dental student loan forgiveness programs – which incentivize new dentists to serve in highly underserved areas – are seen as an essential tool. In turn, Senator Hanson and I introduced this legislation after learning about the limitations of our existing dental loan forgiveness program.

While Wisconsin has had loan forgiveness programs in operation since 2001, there is serious concern that they do not do enough. Currently, a few new dentists each cycle that chose to practice in underserved areas are eligible for \$50,000 in loan repayment over a three year period – so long as they take Medicaid patients at a significant loss. However, at the minimum threshold for required Medicaid participation, dentists face a combined loss of about \$63,100 over a three-year period. This results in a net loss of \$13,100 for dentists who receive these awards.

The Wisconsin Dental Association's Dentist Recruitment Task Force has proposed new criteria for a more effective dentist loan forgiveness program for Wisconsin. We have included their recommendations in our bill in hopes that we will be able to address the shortage of dentists in rural and disadvantaged urban areas and increase the number of dentists currently taking MA patients.

This legislation would create both a grant program for dental students and a loan forgiveness program for new dentists to incentivize settling in an underserved area. Five dental students who apply for the program prior to or during the first part of their first year at dental school will be eligible for a grant of \$30,000 per year (for four years of dental school) in exchange for a guarantee that the student will practice in Wisconsin in a federally-designated Dental Health Professional Shortage Area or see a minimum of 50 new MA patients per year for at least 4 years post graduation. Similarly, five new dentists will be eligible to receive \$20,000 in loan forgiveness per year in exchange for a commitment to working in a Dental Health Professional Shortage Area or with 50 MA patients per year, for up to five years.

Implementing these reforms within our loan forgiveness programs would provide real incentives for dentists to stay in Wisconsin and serve the underserved areas of our state. In turn, more individuals across Wisconsin will have access to essential dental care. I believe that this approach is mutually beneficial to Wisconsin's dentists and their patients, and ask for your support SB 494. Thank you.