



October 28, 14

To whom it may concern,

On behalf of the Executive Board of the California Dental Hygiene Educator's Association we are sending this letter of support for West Los Angeles College's participation in SB 850.

The West Los Angeles College Dental Hygiene Program is a wonderful basic preparation dental hygiene programs in the state. They have a new clinical facility to provide exceptional care to its community members. There is a great need for having community colleges confer a Bachelor of Science degree in Dental Hygiene, Applied Science given the increasing need of dental hygiene care across the Nation and the increasing need and demand for the prevention of oral disease and the promotion of health by the public.

The only dental hygiene baccalaureate degree programs available in California are at private colleges and universities. West Los Angeles College dental hygiene students graduate with more than 100 credits within the dental hygiene program to receive the Associate of Science degree. These students take the same National Dental Hygiene Board examination and the same clinical licensing board exams as students from baccalaureate degree programs. In terms of workforce and future job opportunities, the dental hygienist may work in the fields of research, education, the corporate oral health industry, public health, administration, as well as in clinical practice. Currently the majority of these positions require a minimum of a baccalaureate degree outside of clinical dental hygiene, and some require a master's degree. It is so important for high caliber students to have an opportunity to earn a baccalaureate degree in dental hygiene in California community colleges, such as West Los Angeles College. With the evolving models of healthcare, mid-level healthcare providers and the evidence of oral and systemic health relationships, the dental hygienist will serve an important role in these new, emerging models along with the expansive need supporting the Affordable Care Act. West Los Angeles College is an excellent choice to be involved in the SB 850 pilot program to develop a bachelor's degree program in a community college setting.

Regards,

Gay Teel, RDH, MA
Executive Director