

February 5, 2015

The Honorable Randi Becker
Chair
Senate Health Care Committee
10 Irv Newhouse Building
Olympia, WA 98504-0414

RE: SB 5621-(Relating to the definition of dentistry)

Dear Chairwoman Becker:

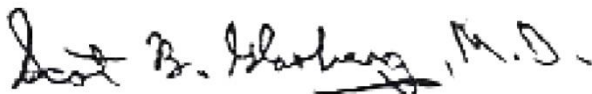
On behalf of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS), I am writing to thank you for your recent decision against hearing Senate Bill 5621. If enacted, this legislation would jeopardize patient safety by expanding the professional scope of dentistry beyond a level appropriate for their training and clinical capacity.

ASPS is the largest association of plastic surgeons in the world, representing more than 7,000 members and 94 percent of all American Board of Plastic Surgery board-certified plastic surgeons in the United States. Our primary interest is to ensure patient safety, and we believe that SB 5621 undermines this by inappropriately authorizing dentists to perform complex surgical procedures. The broad, ambiguous language proposed in the legislation would essentially allow your neighborhood dentist to turn her practice into an aesthetic surgery center.

Many non-physician health care providers are looking for shortcuts to providing increasingly popular elective surgical services, but these shortcuts expose patients to unnecessary risk and potentially hazardous outcomes. While single-degree dentists and oral surgeons (DDS or DMD) have extensive training in the area of oral health, their formal training does not include the level of education or clinical training that surgeons receive in medical school and surgical residency. Dentists simply do not have the requisite training and qualifications to perform complex cosmetic surgical procedures unrelated to dental health, such as a face lift, nose reshaping, eyelid surgery, ear surgery and liposuction.

Again, thank you for your decision on SB 5621. Patients seeking surgical care should know that it is provided by a licensed physician. Please feel free to contact ASPS Senior Manager of Advocacy and Government Affairs, Patrick Hermes, at phermes@plasticsurgery.org for any further discussion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scot B. Glasberg, M.D." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Scot B. Glasberg, MD
President, American Society of Plastic Surgeons