



### AGD Advocacy Hill Day 2023

The AGD held the annual Advocacy Hill Day in Washington, DC on May 22, 23. The Advocacy Hill Day is an opportunity for AGD dentists to meet with their respective state representatives and senators. AGD dentists educate the representatives and senators about dental issues. As the legislative chair for Iowa, I represented Iowa and attended the event. I met with Representative Zach Nunn, Senator Grassley's staff person Nic Pottebaum, and Senator Ernst's staff person, Katie Wood.

Three issues were discussed with the legislators. The legislators were asked to support the issues

1. Competitive Health Insurance Reform Act (CHIRA) of 2020 H.R. 1418 repeals the McCarran-Ferguson antitrust exemption for the health insurance industry. Very simply, the antitrust exemption for the health insurance industry allowed health insurers to enact anticompetitive practices such as down-coding, bundling, incorrect denial of claims and forcing providers to accept payment with a fee laden credit card. Legislators were

asked to urge the Department of Justice to examine the health industry for anticompetitive practices and to take action against the health industry as needed.

2. Oral Health Literacy and Awareness Act H.R. 994 establishes a public health education campaign to promote oral health literacy for vulnerable populations including children, pregnant women, the elderly, disabled individuals, and ethnic and racial minorities. Oral health literacy educates vulnerable populations about treatable diseases including tooth decay, periodontal disease, and oral cancer. Untreated dental disease can contribute to the progression of other diseases including diabetes, heart disease, and Alzheimer's disease.
3. Strengthening Medicaid Incentives for Licensees Enrolled in Dental (SMILED) Act H.R. 1422 would reduce the administrative burden and streamline credentialing for dentists. This would encourage dentists to enroll and stay enrolled in the Medicaid program.

The legislative staffs were interested, took notes, and will prepare reports for their respective legislators. I will continue to communicate with the legislative staff to encourage legislative support for these issues.

Dr. Stephen Thies  
Legislative chair  
Iowa Academy of General Dentistry