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Form Montana Licensing Reform Task Force
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Montana Licensing Reform Task Force

This Task Force was created pursuant to Executive Order 1-2026 on January 29, 2026.

Purpose of the Licensing Reform Task Force

The Task Force shall provide the Governor with recommendations and strategies for the State of Montana to reform the professional occupational licensing system for the purposes of:

- identifying and removing burdens and barriers faced by licensees that are not necessary to protect the public; and
- improving access to and availability of professional services for citizens across Montana, including rural communities.

In developing recommendations and strategies, the Task Force shall seek input from Montana citizens, legislators, Montana associations whose members are licensed occupational professionals, professional licensing boards, relevant state agencies, advisory groups and researchers focused on occupational licensing, and other appropriate stakeholders as determined by the Task Force.

Public Record

Please note that all information received through this form is public record.

Which committee would you like to receive your comment?

Health Care Subcommittee
Barriers Subcommittee
Sunset Review Subcommittee

We want to hear from you!

We would like to receive any comments you would like the Task Force, or one of its subcommittees, to review. In addition, we are specifically looking for feedback for:

1. Specific topics a committee or the task force should consider, and
2. Specific people or organizations you think the task force should hear from.

Do you have a general comment or a specific person or topic for the Task Force to hear from?

Specific person or topic

What are your comments?

To the Licensing Reform Advisory Council:

I have attended many of the Friday meetings and listened carefully to the discussions surrounding the Governor's Executive Order. Throughout those meetings, I have heard repeated discussions regarding expanding access to care, allowing professionals to practice at the top of their education and training, removing unnecessary barriers to service, addressing workforce shortages, and improving healthcare access in rural Montana.

What has been noticeably absent from those discussions is any meaningful conversation regarding denturists.

As someone who has spent my career serving patients, educating future providers, and advocating for the profession, I find it concerning that denturists have not been meaningfully included in a process that appears specifically designed to address the very issues our profession is uniquely positioned to help solve.

The Governor's Executive Order asks whether licensing structures are truly necessary to protect the public, whether they unnecessarily limit access to care, whether they contribute to workforce shortages, and whether qualified professionals are being prevented from providing services they have been educated and trained to perform. Those questions directly apply to the denturist profession.

Denturists are one of the few healthcare professions specifically trained to restore oral function and quality of life for patients who have lost teeth. Many of the patients we serve are elderly, medically compromised, rural, underserved, or living on fixed incomes. These are precisely the populations most affected by provider shortages and access-to-care challenges.

I have repeatedly heard members of the task force state that Montana should become a national leader in access to care. I have also heard repeated statements that professionals should be allowed to practice at the highest level supported by their education and advanced training. If those principles are truly guiding this process, then denturists must be part of the conversation.

Our education is federally accredited, rigorous, and heavily focused on patient safety. We complete extensive training in removable prosthetics, implant-supported prosthetics, patient evaluation, treatment planning, clinical procedures, laboratory procedures, and patient management. Yet despite that education, Montana denturists remain restricted from providing many services that are routinely and safely provided by denturists in other jurisdictions.

To be clear, denturists do not perform oral surgery and do not place dental implants. Those procedures remain the responsibility of appropriately trained surgeons and dentists. Denturists restore the prosthetic teeth that attach to implants after the surgical phase has been completed. The services being discussed involve restoration, maintenance, and prosthetic care—not surgery.

Recently, I attended the national denturist meetings in Canada as a representative of the United States and as the United States liaison to international denturist organizations. During those meetings, I was asked to lead Canada's implant residency program. I find it remarkable that another country would consider me qualified to lead advanced implant prosthetic education at the national level while I am prohibited from practicing many of those same skills within my own state.

Even more importantly, Canadian denturists have been working with implant-supported prosthetics, implant abutments, and radiographic procedures for decades. In some provinces, denturists have practiced under these expanded scopes for more than thirty years. During discussions with Canadian regulatory leaders, I learned that they have done so while maintaining strong patient safety records and without the disciplinary concerns that opponents of scope modernization often predict.

This is important because patient safety should remain the central focus of this discussion. Any proposed expansion should be evidence-based, data-driven, and focused on improving outcomes for patients. The evidence from other jurisdictions demonstrates that expanded denturist scopes can exist safely within a regulated environment while improving access to care.

The Executive Order specifically asks whether existing licensing structures contribute to workforce shortages and limit access to services in rural communities. I believe the answer is clearly yes. Denturists can play a critical role in bridging healthcare gaps in rural Montana. We already live and work in many of the communities struggling to recruit and retain providers. Expanding the scope of trained denturists would immediately increase access to care without requiring the state to create new educational programs, recruit new providers, or build new infrastructure.

I also want to make clear that I am not simply asking the Task Force to accept my opinion. If the Task Force wishes to review successful regulatory models, I would be happy to provide statutory language, regulations, board policies, educational standards, and scope-of-practice frameworks from Canadian provinces and other jurisdictions. I have personally spoken with regulatory leaders who have offered to share their laws, regulations, and implementation strategies with Montana should the Task Force wish to review them.

The Governor created this Task Force to identify barriers that no longer serve their original purpose, to improve access to

care, and to ensure professionals can practice according to their education and training. Denturists deserve the same thoughtful review being afforded to other healthcare professions.

I respectfully ask that the Task Force give serious consideration to the denturist profession, review the evidence from other jurisdictions, evaluate the substantial educational requirements already in place, and determine whether current restrictions continue to serve the public interest.

Montana has an opportunity to become a national leader in healthcare access, workforce innovation, and evidence-based licensing reform. I believe denturists can and should be part of that future.
