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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Felzkowski Celebrates Passage of Oral Healthcare Package

Madison, WI – On Tuesday, the State Senate and the State Assembly overwhelmingly passed a package of bills intended to address the workforce shortage in the oral healthcare field. With 64 of Wisconsin’s 72 counties designated as dental professional shortage areas, this package marks a sorely needed investment in this space.

Sen. Mary Felzkowski (R-Tomahawk), is the author of two of the bills that were passed:

- SB 689- Licensure of Dental Therapists

This bill provides for the licensure of dental therapists, mid-level providers who are members of the dental care team serving under the supervision of a dentist that would be able to engage in limited practices of dentistry, such as fillings and sealants. The bill lays out the parameters for the education requirements and employment conditions of a dental therapist in Wisconsin.

- SB 702- Oral Healthcare Workforce Funding

In the 2023-25 State Budget, the Legislature included \$20 million in one-time funding for our technical colleges to expand oral health care programs on their campuses and allow for the training of more dental hygienists, dental assistants, and other oral healthcare providers. This bill provides the parameters under which the Technical College System can use and apply for these grant dollars.

“I have been working on bringing dental therapists to Wisconsin for close to a decade now. I believe that dental therapists are a crucial piece of the puzzle in addressing our dental care shortage. Providing dental practices with the option to include these well-trained dental professionals on their teams will allow for increased access, lower practice costs, and savings for the state- all without compromising quality of care.”

“The Wisconsin Technical College System is a proven partner in delivering educated professionals ready for the workforce. Putting these dollars into the workforce pipeline is the most effective way to target the oral healthcare access crisis in our state.”

The other two bills in the package ratify the Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact, and create a Rural Dentistry Scholarship Fund.

The bills now head to the Governor's desk where they await his signature to become law.

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