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**House of Representatives**  
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**DATE:** March 29, 2012  
**TO:** All House Members  
**FROM:** Representative John Hornaman  
**SUBJECT:** Proposed Legislation to Establish the *Loan Forgiveness for Dentists Act* in Pennsylvania.

In the near future, I plan to introduce legislation establishing a loan forgiveness program for dentists. I am introducing this legislation as an incentive to encourage students to pursue careers in the field of dentistry. In exchange, students would devote a portion of their time upon graduation practicing in areas designated as having a shortage of dentists.

According to an article by Myron R. Schwartz entitled *The Pipeline from Dental Education to Practice: The Pennsylvania Experience*, dentists comprise the only class of health care providers for which the number of active licenses has declined over the years. Since 1980, less than 50% of Pennsylvania's dental school graduates remained in the Commonwealth to provide patient care. These factors, combined with the aging of the current workforce of dentists, the high cost of dental education, enormous school debt, and no incentive for students to enter the field of dentistry, may leave Pennsylvania with a severe healthcare crisis and a lack of quality dental care in the very near future.

My legislation would provide for up to 50% in loan forgiveness for dentists committed to practicing in Pennsylvania within geographic areas designated as having a shortage of practitioners. Loan forgiveness reimbursement would occur over four years and would not exceed \$100,000. The Medical Education Loan Assistance Program contained in Article XXII-A of the Public School Code provides the basis for this legislation. Funding for the program would be dependent upon an appropriation from the General Assembly.

If you would like to co-sponsor this important legislation, please contact Carla Walker of my office at 772-2297 or [cwalker@pahouse.net](mailto:cwalker@pahouse.net).