Lobby Day

Personally, lobby day was a very big experience for me. I have never been a huge fan of politics, nor taken much interest into how it all works. Seeing how the house of representatives and senators do things, where they spend their days, and seeing how a bill works was awesome. The first representative I met, Blaine Finch, was in favor of the Dental Therapist position. He told us if a bill was pushed he’d say, “yes with no doubt.” I learned that even though you show up to an appointment, a representative or senator may not be there without notice.

A Dental Therapist was also a new term to me. I like the idea of having a mid-level clinician between a dental hygienist and dentist, but the Dental Therapist position still has a few kinks to be worked out. It is supposed to help rural areas or the underprivileged, but under the bill being brought to the house, the Dental Therapist must always be under a dentists’ supervision. Therefore, if the dentist must be present it takes away a Dental Therapist going out to serve underprivileged areas. Also, if the Dental Therapists are not working for a dentist, how will they be paid? If it is not the dentist paying them who is going to fund it? The level of education is very clear, but the finer details have not been perfected. If the bill is passed, it could potentially get the job title started and overtime problems like, supervision and what insurance will cover will work themselves out. I wish I heard more information from the Dental Therapist that spoke at Lobby Day. Due to technical issues, I could only hear bits and pieces. I would like to know more about how much a Dental Therapist is paid. Weighing the benefits of the extra cost of schooling, versus a dental hygienist’s potential income would determine if I continued my education.

In my opinion, a dentist has more responsibility than I want in my career. Opening the option of a dental therapist would give me the option to do more detailed work, but maybe not give the responsibility of running my own office. The dental therapist position sounds like it could benefit Kansas in many ways. I was unaware that it was a “thing” until lobby day. I believe over the years it will become beneficial and be more common. Overall, Lobby Day was a new learning experience, and I’m glad I had the opportunity to attend.