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State Representative • Serving the 66th Assembly District

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Representatives Kerkman and Vos Discuss Issues with Local Dentists

Bristol – State Representatives Samantha Kerkman and Robin Vos recently attended a legislative dinner and forum with the Racine and Kenosha Dental Societies. The purpose of the forum was to discuss dental care access in Wisconsin and exchange ideas aimed at improving access.

“Overall, the event went very well and it gave Rep. Vos and me a chance to meet directly with our constituents who practice dentistry and learn what concerns they have with the state budget and other policies currently circulating within the Legislature,” said Rep. Kerkman. “I also think this enabled us to work together in coming up with ways of overcoming the challenges with which dentistry is faced today, particularly reimbursement rates under subsidized health care programs.”

Issues raised at the forum included dental care access under BadgerCare Plus and Medicaid, and other legislative priorities such as expanding the training of certified dental personnel to provide assistance with certain procedures and implementing a hygiene access model. The government-funded programs currently provide minimal access to dental care, a problem that has been addressed by Rep. Kerkman, Rep. Vos, and their colleagues through the proposal of a statewide pilot program. The hygiene access model and the expansion of training are both intended to enhance access to dental care while upholding safety and the quality of care for all patients.

“Due to proposals enacted by Democrats during the last state budget, more low-income people in Wisconsin than ever are at risk to lose access to dental care,” said Rep. Vos. “Under Wisconsin’s taxpayer-funded health care plan for the poor, dentists are expected to provide care at below the cost. It is a clear example of what would happen if government-run health care becomes a reality – fewer choices and reduced access are almost always the result.”

Rep. Kerkman and Rep. Vos intend to continue their work to expand dental care access in Racine and Kenosha Counties by strongly supporting a pilot program during the remainder of the legislative session. Supported by the Wisconsin Dental Association, the pilot program would increase fees paid to dentists who provide care to lower-income patients.

Joining Rep. Kerkman and Rep. Vos at the forum were Wisconsin Dental Association President Dr. H. Michael Kaske, Wisconsin Dental Association President-Elect Dr. Gene Shoemaker, and other area dentists.

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