The American College of Surgeons (ACS) joins the New York Chapter of the ACS and other medical and surgical organizations in opposition to S.3059 (Libous)/A.2820 (Morelle). This legislation would modify the definition of the scope of practice of dentistry to permit single degree oral surgeons (DDS – not medical doctors) to perform additional elective surgical procedures involving the hard or soft tissues of the oral and maxillofacial area if they are certified by the American Board of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery and granted hospital privileges for such surgical procedures.

The practice of dentistry is defined by New York state law as “diagnosing, treating, operating, or prescribing for any disease, pain, injury, deformity, or physical condition of the oral and maxillofacial area related to restoring and maintaining dental health.” There is a clear distinction between performing necessary surgeries to alleviate physical deformities or serious medical conditions, and the performance of elective procedures aimed at improving the appearance of a patient.

Though oral and maxillofacial surgeons (dentists) may participate in cosmetic surgeries during their residency, they largely participate as part of a team, which includes physicians; and the number of facial cosmetic surgeries they must perform in their final year of residency is significantly lower than the required number of surgeries performed by physician surgical specialists (plastic surgeons, otolaryngologist-head and neck surgeons, and others). Not only does the education and training of these surgeon specialists provide them with extensive experience in the performance of these procedures, but it also makes them uniquely qualified to address facial aesthetics, given their training in the entire head and neck region.

Oral and maxillofacial surgeons, however well qualified in oral health and dental surgery, are not physicians and do not have the medical training and education required to ensure the highest quality of patient care and outcomes. While an important part of the health care team, they should not be permitted to practice medicine and perform elective surgical procedures unrelated to oral health. As such, the American College of Surgeons opposes S.3059/A.2820.

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_The American College of Surgeons is a voluntary, educational and scientific organization devoted to the ethical and competent practice of surgery, and to enhancing the quality of care provided to surgical patients. For over 98 years, the College has disseminated medical and surgical information to the profession and to the general public, and it has been deeply involved in establishing standards of practice. With over 78,000 members, nearly half of which are general surgeons, the ACS is the largest surgical association in the world._