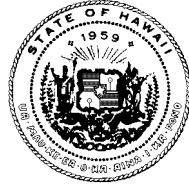


DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

January 25, 2022

TO: The Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Committee on Human Services

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 1294 – RELATING TO MEDICAID BENEFITS**

HEARING: Thursday, January 27, 2022, 3:10 pm
Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the intent of this measure to fund the restoration of adult dental benefits for the Medicaid program. However, we respectfully request that the Legislature consider adding the appropriation to the executive budget. The Governor's budget priorities include funding for the restoration of a basic adult dental benefit of preventive, diagnostic, and some restorative dental services.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this measure is to appropriate funds to restore diagnostic, preventive, and restorative dental benefits to adult Medicaid enrollees.

DHS appreciates and supports the restoration of a basic oral health benefits for adult Medicaid and QUEST Integration beneficiaries. The current limited benefit of emergency-only coverage does not support the goals of whole-person care. Lack of access to preventive oral health care can have a negative impact on a person's health, especially for individuals with chronic diseases, pregnant women, and the health of their newborns. For these reasons, the executive budget includes \$10,195,082 (\$3,466,328 A funds/\$6,728,754 N funds) to restore dental services for adult Medicaid beneficiaries. This amount is the equivalent of Option 1:

Limited dental benefit focused only on prevention and oral disease control (e.g., dental procedures such as diagnostics (x-rays), cleanings, and fillings).

In 2020, DHS Med-QUEST Division (MQD) with the Health Policy Institute of the American Dental Association (HPI ADA) released a study that updated cost estimates for the restoration of the adult dental benefit. MQD identified three coverage options, ranging from a basic dental coverage to a comprehensive option, which is also referenced in this bill.

Option 1. Limited dental benefit focused only on prevention and oral disease control (dental procedures such as diagnostics (x-rays), cleanings, and fillings).

Option 2. Basic dental benefit focused on oral disease control and some restoration of chewing functions (diagnostics, cleanings, fillings, some root canals, some crowns, and some dentures).

Option 3. Comprehensive coverage that includes most dental procedures with some limits.

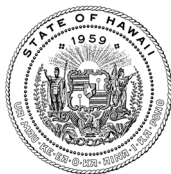
Since the study was released in 2020, the number of adult beneficiaries has increased substantially. Accordingly, the costs of each option were also updated:

	Option 1 (Gov recommended)	Option 2	Option 3
Total Cost	10,195,082	25,952,297	47,384,075
Federal Funds	6,728,754	17,128,516	31,273,490
State Funds	3,466,328	8,823,781	16,110,586

Lastly, if an appropriation is forthcoming, we respectfully request that the Legislature consider adding the appropriation to the executive budget. Including an appropriation via this measure would only be a one-time appropriation which would not support the necessary continuity of an adult dental program.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this bill.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR

GLORIA CHANG
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
P.O. BOX 150
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0150

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND
MANAGEMENT DIVISION
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT (OFAM)

WRITTEN ONLY
TESTIMONY BY CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES
ON
SENATE BILL NO. 1294

January 27, 2022
3:10 p.m.
Room 225 & Videoconference

RELATING TO MEDICAID BENEFITS

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on this bill.

Senate Bill No. 1294 appropriates an unspecified amount of general funds in FY 22 and FY 23 to the Department of Human Services to restore diagnostic, preventive, and restorative dental benefits to adult Medicaid enrollees.

B&F notes that the FY 23 Executive Supplemental Budget already includes \$3,466,328 in general funds and \$6,728,754 in federal funds in HMS 401's budget in FY 23 to restore certain adult dental benefits.

B&F also notes that the federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act requires that states receiving Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) II funds and Governor's Emergency Education Relief II funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and

- Higher education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

Further, the federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act requires that states receiving ARP ESSER funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and
- Higher education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

The U.S. Department of Education has issued rules governing how these maintenance of effort (MOE) requirements are to be administered. B&F will be working with the money committees of the Legislature to ensure that the State of Hawai'i complies with these ESSER MOE requirements.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



ELIZABETH A. CHAR, M.D.
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH

STATE OF HAWAII
STATE COUNCIL
ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
PRINCESS VICTORIA KAMĀMALU BUILDING
1010 RICHARDS STREET, Room 122
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
TELEPHONE: (808) 586-8100 FAX: (808) 586-7543
January 27, 2022

The Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senate Committee Human Services
The Thirty-First Legislature
State Capitol
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Senator San Buenaventura and Committee Members:

SUBJECT: SB1294 Relating to Medicaid Benefits

The Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities **STRONGLY SUPPORTS SB1294** which appropriates funds to restore diagnostic, preventive, and restorative dental benefits to adult Medicaid enrollees.

The Council cannot emphasize the importance of dental care services that include preventive, restorative, prosthetic, and emergency services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We are all aware of how oral health, or the lack thereof, affects all aspects (emotional, psychological, and social) of our lives. Numerous individuals can share with you their experience of having a tooth or teeth extracted or acquiring severe health problems because necessary dental services were not available because of the termination of the Medicaid adult dental benefit coverage in 2008. Compounding these issues is the limited number of dentists on the Neighbor Islands who are available and willing to serve Medicaid enrollees.

Not only does lack of preventative oral care affect one's overall health. It profoundly impacts these individuals' abilities to obtain gainful employment. It is hard to have self-confidence during an interview when you are missing teeth or have poor dental care. Many individuals with intellectual and or developmental disabilities are already at a disadvantage within our current job market; our population does not need poor dental care to add to this issue.

SB1294 Relating to Medicaid Benefits

January 27, 2022

Page 2 of 2

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **strong support of SB1294.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daintry Bartoldus". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

Daintry Bartoldus

Executive Administrator



Date: January 27, 2022

To: The Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
The Honorable Les Ihara, Vice-Chair
Committee on Human Services

From: Peggy Mierzwa, AlohaCare

RE: **SB1294** Relating to Medicaid Benefits

AlohaCare appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT of SB1294**. This measure would appropriate funding to Department of Human Services to restore adult dental benefits to Medicaid members.

Founded in 1994, AlohaCare is a community-rooted, non-profit health plan serving nearly 80,000 Medicaid and dual-eligible health plan members on all islands. It is the only state health plan exclusively serving Medicaid patients. Our mission is to serve individuals and communities in the true spirit of aloha by ensuring and advocating access to quality health care for all. We believe that health is about supporting whole-person care, including access to housing and food security, to build a stronger, healthier Hawaii.

For over a decade, Hawaii's Medicaid program has covered only emergency dental services for adult beneficiaries. Preventative and restorative dental services, as cleanings and x-rays, are not covered for adults. As a result, individuals resort to the emergency room in order to get treatment for complicated infections and excruciating pain. Many times the individual has little options beyond tooth extractions in order to address problem areas. Many of these catastrophic events could have been avoided had preventative care been available.

Oral care has a significant impact on a person's overall health. Individuals with chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease lead to increased disability and death. A lack of preventive services commonly leads to gum disease, which is associated with an increased risk of heart disease. Poor dental health increases the risk of a bacterial infection in the blood stream, which can affect the heart valves; tooth loss patterns are connected to coronary artery disease; strong connection between diabetes and cardiovascular disease and evidence that people with diabetes benefit from periodontal treatment.¹ Pregnant women are at much greater risks to periodontal disease. Periodontitis has been associated with poor pregnancy outcomes, including preterm birth and low birth weight.² Women with poor dental health are more than 3 times more likely to have a child with cavities.³

¹ <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/expert-answers/heart-disease-prevention/faq-20057986>

² <https://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/publications/features/pregnancy-and-oral-health.html>

³ <https://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/publications/features/pregnancy-and-oral-health.html>



ALOHACARE

Providing dental coverage to adults with Medicaid, prevents avoidable health conditions and uplifts the overall health of communities, where people are able to care for their families, stay out of emergency rooms, and live fulfilling lives. This benefit will positively impact the well-being our communities.

We are grateful for your consideration of this important measure.

1357 Kapiolani Blvd., Suite 1250, Honolulu, Hawaii 96814

Call: 973-0712 • Toll-free: 1-877-973-0712 • Fax: 808-973-0726 • www.AlohaCare.org



Hawaii Dental Association

To: Senate Committee on Human Services
Time/Date: 3:10 p.m. January 27, 2022
Location: State Capitol via Video Conference
Re: SB 1294, Relating to Medicaid Benefits

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice-Chair Ihara, and members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Dental Association (HDA) is in **support** of SB 1294, relating to Medicaid benefits. This bill appropriates funds to restore diagnostic, preventive, and restorative dental benefits to adult Medicaid enrollees, provided the Department of Human Services obtains maximum federal matching funds available and pursues all funding sources, including private grants, prior to expending any general fund appropriations.

Oral health is essential for overall health and wellness. Oral health is linked with systemic health conditions and diseases as well as employment opportunities, economic stability, and social connectedness. One cannot be healthy without a healthy mouth. Yet thousands of low income adults in Hawai'i cannot afford the oral health care they need to stay healthy, work, socialize, and live pain free. Part of this disparity is driven by gaps in dental coverage in federal and state policy, particularly dental coverage for adults enrolled in Medicaid. For adults who rely on Medicaid, being able to afford oral health care could be the key to recovering their health or getting a new job. Notably, the people most likely to get sick and lose jobs during the pandemic are also the people who face the biggest barriers to oral health and are among those who would most benefit from improved oral health coverage in Medicaid.¹ For these reasons, we strongly support this measure.

HDA is a statewide membership organization representing dentists practicing in Hawaii and licensed by the State of Hawaii's Board of Dentistry. HDA members are committed to protecting the oral health and well-being of the people of Hawaii, from keiki to kupuna and everyone in between.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 1294.

¹ Vujcic M, Fosse C, Reusch C, Burroughs M. Making the case for adults in all state Medicaid programs. Health Policy Institute White Paper. American Dental Association in partnership with Community Catalyst and Families USA. July 2021

Bill: SB 1294, Relating to Medicaid Benefits

Hearing Date & Time: Thursday, January 27, 2022, 3:10pm

Committees: Senate Committee on Human Services

Testifier: Nancy Partika, RN, MPH

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice-Chair Ihara, and Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services:

My name is Nancy Partika, and I am the Hawaii grassroots representative for OPEN (the Oral Health Progress and Equity Network). I have worked to help identify and address oral health disparities in Hawaii at the community level for the past 5 years.

Hawaii has visibly struggled for decades with oral health disparities and problems accessing care for its most needy. The 2009 abolishment of adult dental benefits under Medicaid and the problems that resulted from adults receiving emergency-only care since then has spiraled, while the State continues to pay out millions per year in acute oral health emergency room care and for other health-related services statewide that does not provide adequate oral health care or support to our at-risk populations such as those on Medicaid.

According to a newly-completed 2021 JABSOM study of ER use statewide for acute oral health conditions, adult Medicaid beneficiaries represent about 25% of Hawaii's population, but they are 47% of all dental services provided by ERs statewide.

Between 2016 and 2020, Medicaid recipients averaged 2,700 emergency room visits per year for acute oral health conditions, totaling \$21,700,000 in charges for outpatient emergency room services alone. Neighbor island ERS on Hawaii island and Kauai have higher rates of ER use for acute dental conditions. SB 2401 (Relating to Adult Medicaid Dental Benefits) has this updated information with preferred language changes over this 2021 version of the bill.

Fiscally, it seems logical that these millions of dollars that could be potentially saved via fewer ER visits and instead wisely utilize a portion of those dollars to pay upfront for preventative and restorative dental care benefits for Medicaid recipients.

Poor oral health is already proven to be linked to an array of acute and chronic health conditions, including: heart disease, diabetes, stroke, depression, low birth weight and premature birth. Researchers have mapped linkages from chronic dental pain to end-stage renal disease, liver transplants, opioid-related emergency department visits, and opioid-related crime. These co-conditions are made worse by having poor oral health, and the care of the oral health of chronically ill or pregnant can be another significant potential area for return on investment. We now recognize that not intervening in oral health conditions early and preventively will cost much more later on in unintended direct and indirect costs.

Currently most states now offer adult Medicaid recipients preventive and restorative adult oral health benefits. By adding a comprehensive or limited dental services benefit, Hawaii's adults on Medicaid should be able to experience fewer oral health-related ER visits, with improvements to their chronic disease risks and overall health status. Broader Medicaid dental benefits for adults would not only support individual health and well-being among Hawaii's most vulnerable adults, but could also improve the employment status and socio-economic strength of our communities.

The Hawaii MQD-DHS and the State Legislature received the Hawaii-specific fiscal analysis from the Health Policy Institute of the American Dental Association in February 2020 that projected both costs and cost-benefits to restore Hawaii adult dental benefits. Three options for reinstating dental benefits were provided at that time.

It has been 12 years since adult dental benefits (other than emergency) have been accessible, and so we should anticipate that many adults on Medicaid will be needing more than basic/skeletal preventive dental care. It is therefore recommended that the Senate advocate for Option 2, which would enable Medicaid recipients to get a wider range of diagnostic, preventive and restorative services, as well as basic prosthodontic and periodontal services, as needed.

The difference in State funding would be \$8,823,781 in state funds for option 2, versus \$3,466,328 in state funds for option 1. Federal funding from would provide the remainder of the costs of the benefits under the Federal Medicaid Assistance Percentage (FMAP).

Limited coverage under option 1 would be capped per recipient and may only cover an annual exam, fluoride treatment, bi-annual cleanings, one set of bite wing X-rays per year and one non-emergency tooth extraction or filling per year. As you can imagine, dental care for someone who has been without any for a long while is likely to exceed this limited benefit. It seems that reinstating coverage to the second option makes more sense, given the high costs paid for poor oral health exacerbated co-conditions and visits to the ER for acute dental care.

What is important to note that this fiscal analysis also projects that over time, additional medical care cost savings estimates range from \$1.9 million per year to \$5.3 million, due to health status improvements in co-occurring health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, pregnancy, and fewer ER visits for services

Your strong support for this bill(SB 1294), with the updated language in SB 2401, is respectfully requested—Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.



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facebook.com/AARPHawaii

The State Legislature
The Senate Committee on Human Services
Thursday, January 27, 2022
3:10 p.m.

TO: The Honorable Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
RE: Support for S.B. 1294, Relating to Medicaid Benefits

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura and Members of the Committee:

My name is Keali'i Lopez and I am the State Director for AARP Hawai'i. AARP is a membership organization of people age fifty and over, with over 140,000 members in Hawai'i.

AARP strongly supports S.B. 1294 which appropriates funds to restore diagnostic, preventive, and restorative dental benefits to adult Medicaid enrollees.

- According to an issue paper on improving dental coverage for older adults, (Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, July 2021), nearly one half of the Medicare population (47%) or 24 million beneficiaries 65 years and older, do not have dental coverage.
- Almost half of all Medicare beneficiaries did not have a dental visit within the past year (47%), with higher rates among those who have low incomes (73%), or who are in fair or poor health (63%), as of 2018.
- Average out-of-pocket spending on dental services among Medicare beneficiaries who had any dental service was \$874 in 2018. One in five Medicare beneficiaries (20%) who used dental services spent more than \$1,000 out-of-pocket on dental care.

Cost concerns and lack of dental coverage contribute to many older adults foregoing routine and other dental procedures. Inadequate dental care can exacerbate chronic medical conditions such as diabetes and heart conditions, and lead to preventable complications that sometimes result in costly emergency room visits. Adults who are disabled, homebound, or institutionalized have an even greater risk of dental diseases. Many of them would be Medicaid recipients. Broadening the dental benefit to the adult Medicaid enrollee will greatly improve their overall health and reduce the risk of costly medical care and emergency room visits.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to **support S.B. 1294**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keali'i S. Lopez". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Keali'i S. López
State Director

Testimony of
Jonathan Ching
Government Relations Director

Before:
Senate Committee on Human Services
The Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
The Honorable Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair

January 27, 2022
3:10 p.m.
Via Videoconference

Re: SB 1294, Relating to Medicaid Benefits

Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Ihara, and committee members, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on SB 1294, which appropriates state general funds to restore diagnostic, preventive, and restorative dental benefits to adult Medicaid enrollees

Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i SUPPORTS SB 1294.

Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i is Hawai'i's largest integrated health system that provides care and coverage for approximately 265,000 members. Each day, more than 4,400 dedicated employees and more than 650 Hawai'i Permanente Medical Group physicians and providers come to work at Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i to care for our members at our 20 medical facilities, including Moanalua Medical Center, providing high-quality care for our members and delivering on our commitment to improve the health of the 1.4 million people living in the communities we serve.

Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i supports policies that ensure all Hawaii residents have access to affordable, high-quality health care. Further, Kaiser Permanente supports "whole-person care," including the provision of access to services and resources that address beneficiaries' physical health, mental health and social needs. We know that adults with poor oral health, often because they lack dental coverage, often struggle to manage other chronic conditions. Furthermore, poor oral health and gum disease (periodontitis) has been associated with an increased risk of developing heart disease and bacterial infection in the blood stream.

To that end, we endorse the provision of coverage through Medicaid for a full range of needs, including dental services. Oral health is a crucial part of overall physical, psychological, social, and economic wellbeing.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen a dramatic increase in Medicaid members; however, comprehensive benefits for Medicaid enrollees was eliminated in 2009 and reduced coverage to emergency only (extraction and pain management).

Given that Medicaid beneficiaries comprise some of the most vulnerable, complex patients, the Medicaid program should play a role in addressing these needs. Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i supports SB 1294 because it is an investment to restore diagnostic, preventive and restorative dental benefits to adult Medicaid enrollees would be relatively small in comparison to the downstream cost savings to the entire healthcare system.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.



THE QUEEN'S HEALTH SYSTEMS

To: The Honorable Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
The Honorable Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair
Members, Senate Committee on Human Services

From: Jacce Mikulanec, Director, Government Relations, The Queen's Health Systems

Date: January 27, 2022

Re: Support for SB 1294 – Relating to Medicaid Benefits

The Queen's Health Systems (Queen's) is a not-for-profit corporation that provides expanded health care capabilities to the people of Hawai'i and the Pacific Basin. Since the founding of the first Queen's hospital in 1859 by Queen Emma and King Kamehameha IV, it has been our mission to provide quality health care services in perpetuity for Native Hawaiians and all of the people of Hawai'i. Over the years, the organization has grown to four hospitals, 66 health care centers and labs, and more than 1,600 physicians statewide. As the preeminent health care system in Hawai'i, Queen's strives to provide superior patient care that is constantly advancing through education and research.

Queen's appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 1294, which would allow for the appropriation of funds to restore dental benefits to adult Medicaid enrollees provided that the Department of Human Services obtain the maximum allowed federal matching and other public and, or, private sources of funding prior to expending any general fund appropriations. Restoration of these funds to provide comprehensive oral health coverage to adults in Medicaid helps avert unnecessary health care costs associated with emergency visits, reduces our State's overall dental spending, and has been shown to help the overall employment and economic security of enrollees.

Annually our Punchbowl facility cares for over 5000 patients who need dental procedures; of those served, roughly half are Medicaid enrollees or uninsured. Our services include preventative oral care, treatment of dental diseases, and higher acuity dentistry (dental procedures that can only be done in a hospital based clinic setting).

Thank you for allowing The Queen's Health Systems to testify in support of SB 1294.

The mission of The Queen's Health Systems is to fulfill the intent of Queen Emma and King Kamehameha IV to provide in perpetuity quality health care services to improve the well-being of Native Hawaiians and all of the people of Hawai'i.



January 27th, 2022

The Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
The Honorable Senator Les Ihara, Jr. Vice Chair

Re: Strong support of SB1294 and (SB 2401) To Restore Comprehensive Adult Medicaid Dental benefits

Aloha,

I am here today to advocate for the adult Medicaid population across the State of Hawaii.

Please SUPPORT the comprehensive restoration of Adult Medicaid Dental benefits.

(A comprehensive restoration of benefits would be Option 3 and not less than Option 2 as indicated in the bill.)

- Oral health is a vital part of overall health.
- Comprehensive dental coverage is part of any responsible health plan.
- Comprehensive dental care can help eliminate the loss of teeth and acute infections.
- Comprehensive dental care reduces the impact of chronic disease.
- If adults do not have the resources to go to the dentist they will wait until there are symptoms (pain, bleeding, swelling); and conditions become costly to treat.
- Medicaid adults have been driven to the hospital emergency rooms for dental problems.
- Families share health care attitudes. Dental neglect of parents impact their keiki.

Please consider these points and SUPPORT the comprehensive restoration of adult dental Medicaid benefits. (A comprehensive restoration of benefits would be Option 3 and not less than Option 2 as indicated in the bill.)

Mahalo,

Anthony S. Kim, DMD

Dental Director

Waimanalo Health Center

Live / Zoom testimony transcript

Aloha Honorable Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Iha, and Committee Members,

My name is Anthony Kim and I serve our community at the Waimanalo Health Center as director of our dental program.

Please support restoring comprehensive adult dental Medicaid benefits.

Without your support, the Medicaid population of adults across the State of Hawaii will continue to be deprived of access to oral health and continue to suffer from the effects of neglect.

Primary effects include, infection, pain, aggressive gum disease, tooth decay and tooth loss.

Secondary effects include a normalization of poor oral health habits and attitudes, low self-image, worsening of chronic health conditions, and the wasteful use of hospital emergency rooms to address dental health problems. These patients in the emergency rooms with dental problems are simply stabilized and sent back out to seek dental care. We do not want dental problems impacting hospital emergency room capacity.

We see the fallout of a lack of dental benefits every day in our dental clinics. It's been this way for over a decade since 2009, the year adult dental Medicaid benefits were cut.

I'm asking you to support the restoration of comprehensive dental benefits for adults on Medicaid.

Please support this bill for the positive impact that your action will have.

I am asking you to partner with us in oral healthcare and contribute to healing in our communities. We need your support. Your action would be meaningful and significant to the health and well-being of our most vulnerable populations.

The pandemic has shown us how fragile our communities are. But it's also revealed our strength and resilience. Let's take these opportunities to rebuild our healthcare infrastructure to benefit Hawaii and continue to work together to improve the lives of our suffering communities.

Your support in restoring comprehensive adult dental Medicaid benefits is a clear step in the right direction for the health of Hawaii.

I wish you and your families good health.

And also, I wish you well in your decision making for the health of others.

Mahalo for your time.



HAWAI'I ORAL HEALTH COALITION

Date: January 27, 2022

To: The Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
The Honorable Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair
Committee on Human Services

Re: Strong Support for SB1294, Relating to Medicaid Benefits

Hrg: January 27, 2022 at 3:10pm - Conference Room 225 & via Videoconference

The Hawai'i Oral Health Coalitionⁱ, covered by the Hawai'i Public Health Institute, is in **strong support** of SB1294, which makes an appropriation to restore certain adult dental benefits to Medicaid enrollees.

SB 1294 appropriates funds to the DHS to restore basic diagnostic, preventive, and restorative dental coverage to adult Medicaid enrollees. In a 2021 survey conducted by Ward Research for HIPHIⁱⁱ, 9 in 10 registered Hawaii voters (92%) strongly agreed that preventative dental benefits should be included in adult Medicaid coverage. Additionally, 38 health and community organizations have expressed support for the reinstatement of this coverage.

Oral health is critical to overall physical, psychological, social, and economic wellbeing. Adults with poor oral health often struggle to manage chronic co-conditions such as diabetes. Researchers have linked poor oral health with cardiovascular disease, stroke and bacterial pneumonia. Pregnant women with poor oral health are at an increased risk of delivering preterm and/or low-birth-weight infants. Missing or broken teeth also create social barriers for adults to find and maintain gainful employment in our service-based economy.

Unfortunately, oral health in our state is a public health crisis, with Hawaii receiving a failing grade of "F" in three recent oral health report cards released by the Pew Center for the Statesⁱⁱⁱ. Drastic cuts in 2009 eliminated essential dental services for Medicaid enrollees and reduced coverage to emergency only (extraction and pain management).

As a consequence of these cuts, many in Hawai'i and across the nation have turned to emergency rooms for oral health care. The ADA reported in 2016 that ER visits nationwide continued to increase in 2012, costing the US health care system \$1.6 billion per year at an average cost of \$749 per visit^{iv}. In Hawai'i, recent data^v show that between 2016 and 2020 there was a total of 29,536 ER visits with a dental related diagnosis among adults aged 21 years and older, with an average of 10% of patients who visited ER for principal dental-related conditions

having revisited the ER at least twice in the same year. Sixty-seven percent (19,691) of these visits had a principal dental diagnosis as the reason they visited the ER. In that same time period, Medicaid claims constituted 45% of the cumulative total charges for the ER visits with a principal dental-related diagnosis, about \$12.3 million. This does not include the total charges for secondary dental-related diagnoses. An estimated 79% of ER dental visits could be diverted to community settings, saving about 48% of the cost of each visit^{vi}.

SB 1294 is a necessary health equity measure. The lack of coverage for diagnostic, preventative, and restorative dental services has had a disparate impact on Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander populations, and those on Neighbor Islands, who are at greater risk for poor oral health and limited access to oral health care. Hawai'i County and Kaua'i County saw the state's highest rates of ER visits with a dental-related diagnosis, and a large portion of Medicaid claims for ER visits with a principal diagnosis between 2016 and 2020 were submitted for Native Hawaiians/Part Native Hawaiian (about 31%, or 2,991) patients.

In 2020, the Health Policy Institute of the American Dental Association published a specific fiscal analysis for Legislative consideration about the costs versus cost-savings in reinstating preventive and restorative dental benefits for adults on Medicaid^{vii}. This analysis highlights three funding options for coverage ranging from basic to comprehensive. The federal government does match up to 50% of the state's investment in reinstating diagnostic, preventative and restorative dental coverage for all adult Medicaid recipients and, to date, 34 states do offer limited or comprehensive benefits for its adult Medicaid recipients^{viii}.

We acknowledge the similarities between SB1294 and SB2401. We **strongly support** the reinstatement of diagnostic, preventive, and restorative dental coverage for adults in Hawai'i enrolled in Medicaid, as reflected in both bills, and respectfully ask you to pass this important measure. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,



Patrick Donnelly
Statewide Oral Health Coalition Manager,
Hawai'i Public Health Institute

i The Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition is community driven and led with fiscal sponsorship from the Hawaii Public Health Institute. Its members represent all Hawai'i islands and diverse sectors across the State. The mission of the Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition is to improve the overall health and wellbeing of all Hawai'i residents by increasing access and equity in oral health care through collaborative partnerships, advocacy, and education.

ii Findings from a Ward Research Study commissioned by the Hawai'i Public Health Institute that summarizes findings from a phone survey among n=810 Hawaii registered voters (+/-3.3 margin of error) conducted between October 26 to November 30, 2021. A copy of the results are available upon request.

iii Hawai'i Oral health: Key Findings, Hawai'i Department of Health. August 2015.

iv Emergency department use for dental conditions continues to increase. Health Policy Institute Research Brief. American Dental Association. April 2015.

v Lailima Data Alliance Hawai'i inpatient and Outpatient dental ER data (2016-2020). Accessed October 12, 2021.

vi, vii Estimating the Cost of Introducing Comprehensive Medicaid Adult Dental Benefits in Hawai'i, Health Policy Institute Research Brief. American Dental Association. February 2020.

viii Medicaid Adult Dental Benefits Coverage by State, Center for Health Care Strategies, Inc., September 2019.



HO'OLA LĀHUI HAWAI'I
P.O. Box 3990; Līhu'e, Hawai'i
Phone: 808.240.0100 Fax: 808.246.9551

January 25, 2021

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES
Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair

Testimony in Support of SB 1294
Restoration of Adult Dental Medicaid Benefits

Thursday 01-27-22, 3:10PM; CR 225 & Videoconference.

Ho'ola Lahui Hawaii the only Federally Qualified Health Center and Native Hawaiian Health Care System on Kauai is strongly **SUPPORTING** this bill to restore adult dental benefits for those on Medicaid.

Dental care is vital to the overall health of individuals. Nearly 50% of all adults aged 30 or older have some form of gum disease according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and adult cavities is on the rise. Around 90% of all adults have had a cavity and 1 in 4 adults have untreated cavities.

It is vital to support the dental benefit restoration to Medicaid for those who are most in need. Prevention will save millions of dollars in restorative care services in the long term. Treating patient in the emergency room for dental care is financially prudent nor does it address the dental health of the patient as they will still need a dentist upon discharge to manage their the long term treatment.

Since 2009 when this benefit was removed, we have witnessed increasing numbers of individuals who are in dire need of care including major decay and infection.

This is the one of the most important bills currently in the legislature to our patients. We strongly encourage the committee to pass this bill and restore full benefits to those most in need.

Respectfully,

David Peters
Chief Executive Officer

SB-1294

Submitted on: 1/24/2022 8:45:26 PM

Testimony for HMS on 1/27/2022 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Louis Erteschik	Testifying for Hawaii Disability Rights Center	Support	No

Comments:

HDRC is in strong support.

SB-1294

Submitted on: 1/25/2022 2:29:12 PM

Testimony for HMS on 1/27/2022 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
suzie	Testifying for Arc of Maui County	Support	No

Comments:

Please provide dental services for Medicaid benefits. Dental health is as important as any other health concern.

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 1294

TO: Chair San Buenaventura, Vice-Chair Ihara, & Members – Senate Committee on Human Services

FROM: Trisha Kajimura
Deputy Director - Community

DATE: January 27, 2022 at 3:10 PM

Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHRC) **supports** SB 1294 which appropriates funds to restore diagnostic, preventive, and restorative dental benefits to adult Medicaid enrollees for FY 2022-2023, requiring DHS to obtain the maximum federal matching funds available and pursue all funding sources, including private grants, prior to expanding any general fund appropriations.

HHRC's mission is to reduce harm, promote health, create wellness, and fight stigma in Hawai'i and the Pacific. We work with many individuals who are impacted by poverty, housing instability, and other social determinants of health. Many of our program participants are adult Medicaid enrollees, some of whom are living with HIV. As the new chapter of the Life Foundation, HHRC has provided case management and other services to individuals living with HIV since the Life Foundation first opened in 1983.

The elimination of diagnostic, preventive and restorative dental services for adults on Medicaid in 2009 caused a major gap in health care for our clients that we have been fighting an uphill battle to help them with ever since. Dental care is a major part of health care that everyone needs access to. The consequences of inadequate dental care for the medically vulnerable can be very harmful. Our Medicaid enrolled clients frequently request financial assistance for dental care and it has been impossible for us to pay for all of the services they need. Inadequate dental care leads to preventable pain, suffering, stigma and illness. Our Medicaid enrolled clients are faced with extraction as the only option to treat a toothache. Then they have no treatment options for their missing tooth, which in addition to the health problem, causes social and employment discrimination. This gap in health care has been devastating and it needs to be addressed.

Please prioritize this restoration of essential health services in Hawai'i. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



949 Kamokila Boulevard, 3rd Floor, Suite 350, Kapolei, HI 96707
808.675.7300 | www.ohanahealthplan.com

January 27, 2022
3:10 p.m.

Conference Room 225 & Videoconference

To: The Honorable Chair Joy A. San Buenaventura
The Honorable Vice Chair Les Ihara, Jr.
Senate Committee on Human Services

From: 'Ohana Health Plan
Rachel Wilkinson, Government Relations Manager

Re: SB1294, Relating to Medicaid Benefits; **In Support**

'Ohana Health Plan offers our **support** of SB1294, which appropriates funds to restore diagnostic, preventive, and restorative dental benefits to adult Medicaid enrollees, provided the department of human services obtains maximum federal matching funds available and pursues all funding sources, including private grants, prior to expending any general fund appropriations.

'Ohana Health Plan is a wholly owned subsidiary of Centene Corporation, a leading multi-national healthcare enterprise committed to helping people live healthier lives. Since 2008, 'Ohana Health Plan has provided government-sponsored managed care services to families—from keiki to kupuna—and individuals with complex medical needs primarily through QUEST Integration (Medicaid), Medicare Advantage and Medicare Prescription Drug Plans across the state.

Poor oral health is one of the most important issues facing our state, particularly with the Medicaid population. While oral health can often be overlooked, there is a clear relationship between preventive dental care and the deterrence of serious medical conditions.

According to the Hawaii Department of Health's 2012 *Hawaii Oral Health: Key Findings* report, there were more than 3,000 emergency room visits in Hawaii for preventable dental problems, resulting in \$8.5 million in hospital charges. Studies have shown links between gum disease and higher risks of heart attack, stroke, diabetes, and rheumatoid arthritis. Oral health diseases have also been shown to cause low-birth rates and pre-term births for pregnant women.

The state's investment to restore diagnostic, preventive and restorative dental benefits to adult Medicaid enrollees would be relatively small in comparison to the downstream cost savings to the entire healthcare system.

We strongly urge the passage of SB1294. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this measure.



Hawai'i
Children's Action Network Speaks!
Building a unified voice for Hawai'i's children

To: Senator San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Ihara, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services

Re: **SB 1294- Relating to Medicaid benefits**
3:10 PM, January 27, 2022

Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Ihara, and committee members,

On behalf of HCAN Speaks!, thank you for the opportunity to **testify in strong support of Senate Bill 1294**, relating to Medicaid benefits.

This is the year to restore diagnostic, preventive, and restorative dental benefits for adults on Medicaid. Oral Health is essential to overall health. But since 2009, we have treated oral health like a luxury instead of a need. It is costly to both individuals and the state. Extending dental coverage to patients with chronic health conditions like diabetes and heart disease can lead to cost savings in related areas of health care spending. It's estimated additional medical care cost savings range from \$1.9 million to \$5.3 million.

This is a multi-generation issue. Hawai'i's children have some of the worst oral health outcomes in the country. Our third graders have the highest prevalence of tooth decay and 7 out of 10 third graders are impacted by tooth decay. Oral health habits are a family issue and if parents have access to dental prevention services, the whole family will benefit. Our most vulnerable families had this benefit previously and we believe it should be restored.

Oral health is health and reinstating these benefits is a cost-effective, person-centered approach to making our communities healthier. **For these reasons, HCAN Speaks! respectfully requests the Committee to support this measure.**

Thank you,

Kathleen Algire
Director of Early Learning and Health Policy



SB-1294

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 10:10:59 AM

Testimony for HMS on 1/27/2022 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Lauren N. Bundschuh DDS	Testifying for Ho'ola Lahui Hawaii	Support	No

Comments:

Committee on Human Services

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair

Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair

I am in support of this bill to restore Adult Dental Medicaid benefits in Hawaii.

Because we do not have Community Water Fluoridation in our islands, which the CDC named as one of the Ten Great Health Interventions of the 20th Century, we need an alternative intervention to help with the increasing oral concerns among low-income adults.

Since the elimination of dental services for adults of Medicaid in 2009, there has been an increase in dental related ER visits. Between years 2016 and 2020, almost 30,000 adults ages 21 and older visited the ER with a dental related diagnosis. 49% of those visits were Medicaid recipients. 12.3 M of all charges for ER visits with a principal dental diagnosis was charged to Medicaid.

There are more and more evidence and research linking the oral condition directly and indirectly to chronic health conditions such as heart disease and diabetes. It is well established that Periodontitis is associated with preterm birth and low birth weight. Investing in oral health in our adults translates to improved overall health.

In this current global health situation we find ourselves, there are many uncertainties. Comprehensive Medicaid Adult Dental benefits are tried and true. Let's make a positive difference.

Sincerely,

Lauren N. Bundschuh, DDS

Dental Director

Ho'ola Lahui Hawaii

SB-1294

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 8:28:55 AM

Testimony for HMS on 1/27/2022 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Brian Higa	Testifying for Bay Clinic, Inc.	Support	No

Comments:

1. My name is Brian Higa and I am the Chief Dental Officer at Bay Clinic, Inc. on the Big Island of Hawaii. I have the privilege of treating the people of Hawaii Island through our public health center. I am writing a testimony in strong support of SB 1294 (restoring adult benefits to Medicaid enrollees). Currently, Medicaid only covers emergency services for adults 21yrs or older. This means these patients can only receive covered care when they are already in pain or have an infection associated with their oral cavity. This should be considered a very poor standard of care. I believe no one would want this type of coverage for themselves or the ones they care most about. Adding preventative and restorative benefits would allow for comprehensive oral care. This would have a positive effect on speech, diet, and self-confidence for these patients (resulting in better overall health). Patients who don't see their dentist for regular cleanings and evaluations also miss out on the opportunity to detect oral pathology (including oral cancer) at early treatable stages. Early tooth loss also presents barriers to a person's ability to get a job and provide for themselves and their families. Restoring adult benefits also is cost effective. Toothaches are one the most common reasons for emergency room visits in states without adult benefits. In closing, I strongly support SB 1294 to give the adult Medicaid patients the coverage every human being deserves.



ACOG
The American College of
Obstetricians and Gynecologists

*American College of
Obstetricians and Gynecologists
District VIII, Hawai'i (Guam & American Samoa) Section*

TO: Senate Committee on Human Services
Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair

DATE: Thursday, January 27, 2022

FROM: ACOG Hawai'i Section
Reni Soon, MD, MPH, FACOG, Chair

Re: SB1294 – Relating to Medicaid Benefits
Position: SUPPORT

The Hawai'i Section of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG HI) strongly supports SB1294 which would restore adult dental Medicaid benefits. Including dental benefits for Medicaid recipients creates an opportunity to improve the health of Hawai'i's most vulnerable patient populations: pregnant women receiving Medicaid.

Poor dentition is a risk factor contributing to pregnancy complications such as preterm birth, preeclampsia (high blood pressure in pregnancy), and low birth weight of the newborn. These conditions are costly with consequences often including prolonged hospitalizations for moms and newborns. Facilitating access to dental care through Medicaid coverage not only provides a direct benefit in reducing these types of pregnancy complications but additionally would provide an entry point into routine preventative dental care.

Pregnancy is a crucial time to establish preventative health care that optimally includes routine dental cleanings and treatment. Less than half of all pregnant women in the US report having dental cleanings during pregnancy, and this percentage is even lower among the most socially disadvantaged pregnant women (American Public Health Association, 2020). As poor dentition and dental disease can worsen in pregnancy, it is critical to provide access and coverage for patients to obtain care.

As of January 2021, 32 US States covered preventative services such as cleanings for adult Medicaid enrollees. We urge you to add Hawai'i to this list and ask you consider the health of pregnant patients in particular by adding dental benefits to adult Medicaid in Hawai'i.

Oral health is health. Reinstating these benefits is a cost-effective, person-centered approach to making our communities healthier. Please support adult dental Medicaid benefits as a direct way to improve the health of pregnant patients and newborns.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.



January 25, 2021

The Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
The Honorable Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services

Senate Bill 1294 – Relating to Medicaid Benefits

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Ihara, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Association of Health Plans (HAHP) appreciates the opportunity to testify in **support** of SB 1294. HAHP is a statewide partnership that unifies Hawaii’s health plans to improve the health of Hawaii’s communities together. A majority of Hawaii residents receive their health coverage through a plan associated with one of our organizations.

HAHP believes that preventive and restorative dental care improves health care outcomes, especially for those living with chronic disease such as diabetes and heart disease. HAHP supports the legislature’s intent to restore funding for adult dental care benefits for the Medicaid population.

Thank you for allowing us to testify expressing our support for SB 1294.

Sincerely,

HAHP Public Policy Committee

cc: HAHP Board Members



January 25, 2022

The Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
The Honorable Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services

Re: SB 1294 – Relating to Medicaid Benefits

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Ihara, and Committee Members:

Hawaii Medical Service Association (HMSA) appreciates the opportunity to testify on SB 1294, which appropriates funds to restore diagnostic, preventive, and restorative dental benefits to adult Medicaid enrollees, provided the department of human services obtains maximum federal matching funds available and purses all funding sources, including private grants, prior to expending any general fund appropriations.

HMSA supports access to dental coverage and oral health care for our members. We believe that preventive and restorative dentistry services are important as they can decrease potential health care complications for individuals living with chronic diseases, such as heart disease and diabetes.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 1294.

Sincerely,

Matthew W. Sasaki
Assistant Vice President
Government & External Relations



HAWAII STATE RURAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Established in 1998, the Hawaii State Rural Health Association (HSRHA) is a 501(C)3 non-profit organization dedicated to addressing rural health needs across our island state.

~ Working Together To Promote
Healthy Rural Communities ~

January 26, 2022

Testimony in Support of SB 1294 APPROPRIATES FUNDS TO RESTORE DIAGNOSTIC, PREVENTIVE, AND RESTORATIVE DENTAL BENEFITS TO ADULT MEDICAID ENROLLEES

The Hawaii State Rural Health Association (HSRHA) respectfully submits written testimony in strong support of SB1294.

As a non-profit rural health association, our mission is to advocate for statewide access to comprehensive healthcare that includes dental health, primary care, and behavioral health as an integral part of a person's overall health and wellness. Quite often, our neighbor island rural communities struggle to obtain equitable access to timely dental care.

Adults with dental disease often face challenges that impair their productivity and well-being. They suffer in pain and may have to take time off from work because of a toothache or other serious oral health issues. Left untreated, tooth decay and gum disease are linked to severe health problems, including premature births in pregnant women and chronic conditions like heart disease, diabetes, and stroke.

The Hawaii State Rural Health Association's Board of Directors strongly supports this bill to restore adult dental benefits to Medicaid enrollees as a crucial first step to improve oral health amongst our most vulnerable populations. Improving access to dental care, in addition to investing in oral health prevention, pays off in the long term. All residents in Hawaii should be able to receive culturally appropriate and timely healthcare where they reside.

Executive Board:

Lisa Rantz, Hawai'i
Judy Mikami, Moloka'i
Valerie Janikowski, Lana'i
Cristin Gallagher, Hawai'i

Board At Large:

Kimberly Kobayashi, Hawai'i
Jessie Marques, Ka'u
Charlene Burgess, Kaua'i
Laura Reichhardt, O'ahu
Puanani Hee, Kaua'i
Gregg Kishaba, O'ahu
Kelley Withy, O'ahu

Priorities:

Rural Provider Shortages
Workforce Development
Opioid and Substance Abuse
Primary Prevention
Health Equity

Hawaii State Rural Health Association

140 Rainbow Drive
Hilo, HI 96720
hsrhacoordinator@gmail.com
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Twitter @Hawaii_ECHO



KŌKUA KALIHI VALLEY COMPREHENSIVE FAMILY SERVICES

2239 N. SCHOOL STREET ♦ HONOLULU, HAWAII 96819 ♦ TEL: 808-791-9400 ♦ FAX: 808-848-0979 ♦ www.kkv.net

To: Senate Committee on Human Services

Hearing Date/Time: Thursday, January 27, 2022, 3:10 PM

Re: SB 1294 ,Relating to Adult Dental Medicaid Benefits Testimony in support

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and committee members,

Thank you for the opportunity to *testify in support* on SB 1294 relating to adult dental Medicaid benefits.

In 2009, Hawaii eliminated diagnostic, preventive and restorative dental services for adults on Medicaid. Hawaii is currently one of only 13 states that provide emergency care only. Since 2009, we have seen increased emergency department (ED) utilization and increased costs related to otherwise preventable conditions.

Recent data show that between 2016 and 2020 there was a total of 29,536 ED visits with a dental related diagnosis among adults aged 21 years and older. Sixty-seven percent (19,691) of these visits had a principal dental diagnosis as the reason they visited the ED. In that same time period, Medicaid claims constituted 45% of the cumulative total charges for the ED visits with a principal dental-related diagnosis, about \$12.3 million.

Moreover, a study published in 2022 found that the average Medicaid enrollee with five continuous years of preventive care experiences 43% lower costs than an individual who received no preventive dental care at all. Most of the savings were a result of fewer oral surgeries. A Medicaid enrollee with no preventive dental visits was eight times more likely to have an ED visit for a nontraumatic dental condition (NTDC), seven times more likely to have oral surgery and six times more likely to receive a dental-related opioid prescription compared to those who had a dental prevention visit every year in the 5-year lookback period.

This highlights the value and cost savings of providing preventive dental care to Medicaid adult enrollees and the impact it has on reducing costly ED visits.

Please support reinstating adult dental Medicaid benefits. Oral health is health and reinstating these benefits is a cost-effective, person-centered approach to making our communities healthier.

Thank you,

David Derauf, MD, MPH

Executive Director

Kokua Kalihi Valley Comprehensive Family Services



**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Human Services
Thursday, January 27, 2022; 3:10 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 225
Via Videoconference**

RE: SENATE BILL NO. 1294, RELATING TO MEDICAID BENEFITS.

Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Ihara, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Primary Care Association (HPCA) is a 501(c)(3) organization established to advocate for, expand access to, and sustain high quality care through the statewide network of Community Health Centers throughout the State of Hawaii. The HPCA **SUPPORTS** the reinstatement of dental benefits to adult Medicaid enrollees at federally qualified health centers (FQHCs).

By way of background, the HPCA represents Hawaii's FQHCs. FQHCs provide desperately needed medical services at the frontlines in rural and underserved communities. Long considered champions for creating a more sustainable, integrated, and wellness-oriented system of health, FQHCs provide a more efficient, more effective and more comprehensive system of healthcare.

The bill, as received by your Committee, would appropriate an unspecified amounts of general funds for fiscal years 2021-2022 and 2022-2023, respectively, to restore diagnostic, preventative, and restorative dental benefits to adult Medicaid enrollees. The bill further requires the Department of Human Services (DHS) to obtain the maximum federal matching funds available for this expenditure, and to pursue all funding sources known to this State, including private grants, prior to expending any general funds appropriated.

This bill was introduced during the 2021 Regular Session and carried over to the 2022 Regular Session

Since 2008, the HPCA has consistently urged the reinstatement of this essential benefit. At that time, the Legislature faced enormous fiscal challenges that forced your predecessors to make many difficult decisions. The elimination of adult dental Medicaid benefits was just one of many painful cuts that needed to be made for the good of all.

Testimony on Senate Bill No. 1294
Thursday, January 27, 2022; 3:10 p.m.
Page 2

As the economy rebounded, most of the programs cut were reorganized and many were reinstated to ensure that the needs of our citizens are met. Yet, adult dental Medicaid was never returned..

With each year that essential services were denied to our most vulnerable populations, the gap between the "haves" and "have nots" grew and their health outcomes declined. After 14 years of neglect, many in our community are in distress.

This Legislature and Administration have the opportunity to right a wrong that apathy has caused. No longer should the lack of funds be the justification to withhold essential health care to those most in need. Too many people have suffered. Too many people are suffering.

Should the Legislature ensure that federal funding be maximized? Of course, and with the expanded FMAP available under the numerous federal relief Acts, the Department of Human Services should have ample flexibility to likewise maximize the package of benefits offered to recipients.

The question is whether there is sufficient political will to help those most in need. That is something that the HPCA cannot answer, but we will watch and see whether it will be necessary for us to be back at this table again next year as we have been for the past fourteen.

The HPCA urges this body to do the right thing.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Public Affairs and Policy Director Erik K. Abe at 536-8442, or eabe@hawaiiipca.net.



To: Chair Joy San Buenaventura
Vice Chair Les Ihara
Senate Committee on Human Services

From: David W. Heywood, Health Plan CEO
UnitedHealthcare Community Plan Hawaii

Re: SB 1294, Relating to Medicaid Benefits; **In Support**
January 27, 2022; Conference Room 225

UnitedHealthcare (UHC) serves approximately 59,000 QUEST Integration (Medicaid) and 37,500 Medicare Advantage members in Hawaii. We also provide Medicare Part D, Medicare Supplemental, and other health programs/services in the islands. Our team is comprised of over 400 employees across the islands with offices in Honolulu, Kahului, and Hilo.

UHC **supports** SB 1294, which appropriates funds to restore diagnostic, preventive, and restorative dental benefits to adult Medicaid enrollees, provided the Department of Human Services obtains maximum federal matching funds available and pursues all funding sources, including private grants, prior to expending any general fund appropriations.

Poor oral health is one of the more important issues facing our state, particularly with the adult Medicaid population. There is a clear relationship between preventative dental care and the deterrence of serious medical conditions. This investment in adult dental benefits not only improves the overall wellness for an underserved population of Hawaii's most vulnerable residents, but it will also lead to cost savings to the entire healthcare system.

We strongly urge the passage of SB 1294. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this measure.

SB-1294

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 12:19:45 PM

Testimony for HMS on 1/27/2022 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Hide Wu	Testifying for Early Childhood Action Strategy	Support	No

Comments:

To: HMS COMMITTEE

Hearing Date/Time: Thursday, Jan. 27, at 3:10 pm.

Re: SB1294,Relating to Adult Dental Medicaid Benefits Testimony in support

Dear Chair Joy A. San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Les Ihara Jr., and committee members,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support on SB1294 relating to adult dental medicaid benefits.

Restoring adult dental medicaid benefits is important because Oral Health is essential to overall health. Extending dental coverage to patients with chronic health conditions like diabetes and heart disease can lead to cost savings in related areas of health care spending.

Please support reinstating adult dental medicaid benefits. Oral health is health and reinstating these benefits is a cost-effective, person-centered approach to making our communities healthier.

Thank you,

Hide Wu

Early Childhood Action Strategy

Testimony in Support of SB1294

January 26, 2022

Dear Chair San Buenaventura and Respected Members of the Committee on Human Services:

The Hawaii Dental Hygienists' Association (HDHA) strongly **SUPPORTS SB 1294**. The bill appropriates funds to the Department of Human Services to restore basic adult dental benefits to Medicaid and QUEST enrollees. We congratulate you on your initiative to expand Medicaid dental services for adults to include preventive, diagnostic and restorative treatment. This provision would directly benefit Hawaii's seniors, as well as adults with developmental and physical disabilities, allowing them to gain access to necessary oral health treatment.

HDHA cannot emphasize enough the importance of dental care services that include preventive, restorative, prosthetic, and emergency services for all residents of Hawaii. As prevention specialists, dental hygienists are keenly aware of how oral health, or the lack thereof, can affect all aspects (physical, emotional, psychological, and social) of our lives. Time and again, research has shown that oral health has a direct correlation to over-all health. The mouth, is not a separate entity unto itself, it is connected to and shares a circulatory system with the rest of the body. Ignoring or limiting oral healthcare places Hawaii's adult Medicaid population at significant risk for increased health problems.

As the largest association representing Hawaii's licensed dental hygienists', HDHA strongly **SUPPORTS SB 1294** to address the unnecessary effects of dental disease among Hawaii's people, as well as the phenomenal expense of Medicaid enrollees seeking dental care in emergency room settings. Extending dental coverage to adults with chronic conditions like heart disease and diabetes has been proven to lead to significant cost savings in all areas of healthcare across the nation. The same quality of care and cost savings can be experienced here in Hawaii if adult dental benefits are restored to the Medicaid population.

Thank you for your consideration.



Papa Ola Lokahi
Nana I Ka Pono Na Ma

Papa Ola Lōkahi

894 Queen Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Phone: 808.597.6550 ~ Facsimile: 808.597.6551

Senate Committee on Human Services

Senator Joy San Buenaventura, Chair

Senator Les Ihara Jr., Vice Chair

Thursday, January 27, 2021, 3:10PM, Videoconference

RE: SB 1294 – Relating to Medicaid Benefits

Position: STRONG SUPPORT

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Ihara Jr., and Members of the Committee on Human Services,

Papa Ola Lōkahi **supports** SB 1294, which would provide funds to increase access to oral health care by restoring diagnostic, preventive, and restorative dental benefits to adult Medicaid enrollees. The 2009 elimination of dental services from Medicaid appears to be linked to serious impacts, including increased emergency department utilization and more costly oral health concerns. Data from 2006 and 2012 in Hawai‘i shows that Medicaid emergency department visits increased by 67%, which translated into hospital charges increasing from about \$4 million to over \$8.5 million.¹

Papa Ola Lōkahi supports efforts to provide protective and preventive measures through person-centered policies that guard and sustain the health of our communities. This bill calls for funding that has a clear impact for the Medicaid population; oral disease risk is higher for those who suffer from chronic conditions such as heart disease, emphysema, diabetes, hepatitis C, and obesity.² Native Hawaiians experience shorter life expectancies and higher mortality rates due to these chronic conditions and are also overrepresented in the Medicaid population, so the provision of dental services impacts Native Hawaiian health disproportionately.

Native Hawaiians hold a holistic view of health, in which the health of the people, land, and spiritual realms are interconnected. This perspective lends to envisioning health care policies, programs, and delivery that provide resources for all aspects of health and ensure equitable access to services. SB 1294, as a step to those larger goals, works to provide a critical set of services to those most in need.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support this important legislation.

About Papa Ola Lōkahi

Papa Ola Lōkahi holds the mission of improving the health status and well-being of Native Hawaiians and others by advocating for, initiating, and maintaining culturally appropriate strategic actions aimed at improving the physical, mental, and spiritual health of Native Hawaiians and their ‘ohana, and empowering them to determine their own destinies. This mission works towards Papa Ola Lōkahi’s vision of a thriving Native community of health individuals, families, and communities who are informed about their rich heritage and culture living in a state of lōkahi (unity) and making informed choices and responsible decisions in a safe island society that is pono (in proper order). Created through the Native Hawaiian Health Care Improvement Act, Papa Ola Lōkahi is the designated organization charged with a variety of mandates, which include coordinating, implementing, and updating a Native Hawaiian comprehensive health care master plan; leading the five Native Hawaiian Health Care Systems; and housing the Native Hawaiian Health Scholarship Program.

¹ Hawai‘i Oral Health: Key Findings. (2015). Family Health Services Division. Hawai‘i State Department of Health.

https://health.hawaii.gov/about/files/2013/06/Key_Findings_wC.pdf

² Griffin S, Barker L, Griffin P, Cleveland J, Kohn W. Oral health needs among adults in the United States with chronic diseases. *J Am Dent Assoc.* 2009;140(10):1266-1274.

Papa Ola Lokahi

is a non-profit Native Hawaiian organization founded in 1988 for the purpose of improving the health and well-being of Native Hawaiians and other native peoples of the Pacific and continental United States.

Board of Directors

Member Organizations

Ho‘ola Lahui Hawaii

Hui No Ke Ola Pono

Hui Malama Ola Na ‘Oiwī

ALU LIKE

Ke Ola Mamo

E Ola Mau

University of Hawai‘i

Hawai‘i State Department of Health

Na Pu‘uwai

Office of Hawaiian Affairs

Executive Director

Sheri-Ann Daniels, EdD



*20 Years of Empowering People to Live, Work,
Learn and Enjoy Life on Hawai'i Island*

To: HMS Committee

Hearing Date/Time: 1/27/22 3:10P

Re: **SB1294** ,Relating to Adult Dental Medicaid Benefits Testimony in support

Dear Chair Sen. San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Sen. Ihara, Jr., and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to **testify in support** on SB 1294 relating to adult dental Medicaid benefits.

Restoring adult dental Medicaid benefits is important because it restores diagnostic, preventative, and restorative dental benefits to adult Medicaid enrollees including many people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. People with developmental disabilities have historically experienced exclusion and isolation. Appropriate preventative and restorative dental care are an important component to keeping people healthy and fully participating in the life of the community. In Hawai'i, more than 1 in 3 low income adults indicate that the condition of their mouth and teeth affects their ability to interview for a job. Oral health is essential to overall health. Emergency department utilization is not an appropriate, effective, or responsible solution for treating preventable oral health conditions.

Please support reinstating adult dental Medicaid benefits. Oral health is health and reinstating these benefits is a cost-effective, person-centered approach to making our communities healthier.

Thank you,
Jim Kilgore, Executive Director
Full Life



January 25, 2022

SB 1294

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES (CHS)

Senator Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice-Chair

I am submitting this letter in support of **SB 1294** on behalf of Easterseals Hawaii and the families we serve. Easterseals Hawaii provides Home and Community Based Service (HCBS) Programs to 250 adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities in nine locations statewide. Our Mission is to ensure that all people with disabilities or special needs and their families have equal opportunities to live, learn, work and play in their communities. Most adults that participate in the Home and Community Based Services program receive their health services through the Med-Quest program and would benefit from the restoration of dental services.

Oral health is a crucial part of a person's physical, psychological, social and economic health and wellbeing. Missing or broken teeth create social and economic barriers for adults to make friends and find and maintain gainful employment in our service-based economy.

Studies have shown that poor oral health contributes to acute and chronic health conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, depression, low birth weight babies, and Ventilator Associated Pneumonia (VAP). Patients who had received preventive dental care in the last three years were 22% less likely to develop VAP during ventilator treatment for COVID-19.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter of support for **SB 1294**.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "apettiford".

Andrea Pettiford
Interim Chief Executive Officer
Easterseals Hawaii

SB-1294

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 3:07:35 PM

Testimony for HMS on 1/27/2022 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
GARY SIMON	Testifying for Hawaii Family Caregiver Coalition	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Ihara, and Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services,

I am Gary Simon, Treasurer of the Hawaii Family Caregiver Coalition (HFCC).

I am testifying as an individual who has worked in healthcare for over thirty years, and I am offering testimony on behalf of HFCC.

HFCC strongly supports Senate Bill 1294.

Restoring dental benefits to adult Medicaid enrollees fulfills good public policy of maintaining and improving the health of our residents.

We urge you to support SB 1294.

We thank you for seriously considering the bill.

Very sincerely,

Gary Simon

Treasurer

Hawaii Family Caregiver Coalition

January 27th, 3:10 P.M., Conference Room 225

Dear Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair Senate Committee on Human Services

Dear Honorable Senator Les Ihara, Jr. Vice Chair Senate Committee on Human Services

My name is Kylene Shimamoto and I am in support of SB 1294. I have Medicaid. I have waited for a long time for help with my teeth and dentist.

January 27th, 3:10 P.M., Conference Room 225

Dear Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair Senate Committee on Human Services

Dear Honorable Senator Les Ihara, Jr. Vice Chair Senate Committee on Human Services

My name is Herman Ki'ili and I am in support of SB 1294. I receive only one time a year for my dentist visit. I want to have good teeth because one day I want to get married. I have a fiancé now and I need more help from my dentist so I can eat my food good. Please pass SB 1294. Medicaid is very important so I can get teeth services to help me live in the community. Thank you.

January 27th, 3:10 P.M., Conference Room 225

Dear Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair Senate Committee on Human Services

Dear Honorable Senator Les Ihara, Jr. Vice Chair Senate Committee on Human Services

My name is Audrey Ayer and I am in support of SB 1294. People like me need more dentist Medicaid help so me and my friends can live in our homes. Please pass SB 1294. Thank you.

January 27th, 3:10 P.M., Conference Room 225

Dear Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair Senate Committee on Human Services

Dear Honorable Senator Les Ihara, Jr. Vice Chair Senate Committee on Human Services

My name is Bathey Fong and I am in support of SB 1294. I really need a good dentist and want to make sure my gums don't hurt and my teeth don't hurt and I can eat without pain. I have Medicaid and I am a person with a disability and in a wheelchair because I cannot walk goo. Please pass SB 1294. Thank you.

January 27th, 3:10 P.M., Conference Room 225

Dear Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair Senate Committee on Human Services

Dear Honorable Senator Les Ihara, Jr. Vice Chair Senate Committee on Human Services

My name is Nicole Kelly and I am in support of SB 1294. I want to be able to choose a dentist to help me have good teeth and clean teeth. Please pass SB 1294. Thank you.

January 27th, 3:10 P.M., Conference Room 225

Dear Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair Senate Committee on Human Services

Dear Honorable Senator Les Ihara, Jr. Vice Chair Senate Committee on Human Services

My name is Ho'opi'o Balaz and I am in support of SB 1294. I need a good dentist, like my aunty who is a good doctor. Please pass SB 1294. Thank you.

January 27th, 3:10 P.M., Conference Room 225

Dear Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair Senate Committee on Human Services

Dear Honorable Senator Les Ihara, Jr. Vice Chair Senate Committee on Human Services

My name is Kaili Swan and I am in support of SB 1294. I definitely want to have better dental care. I sometimes don't like to go to my dentist because I scared of the drill. I need help choosing a good dentist that can help me feel better when I go. Thank you.

January 27th, 3:10 P.M., Conference Room 225

Dear Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair Senate Committee on Human Services

Dear Honorable Senator Les Ihara, Jr. Vice Chair Senate Committee on Human Services

My name is David Beatovich and I support of SB 1294. I want to visit the dentist more and more.
Thank you.

January 27th, 3:10 P.M., Conference Room 225

Dear Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair Senate Committee on Human Services

Dear Honorable Senator Les Ihara, Jr. Vice Chair Senate Committee on Human Services

My name is Timothy Renken and I am in support of SB 1294. I have not gone to the dentist because I need more help with my teeth to be fixed. I lost almost all of my front teeth and cannot eat many foods because it hurts too much. I cannot use a toothbrush and toothpaste because it hurts to use it. I only use a mouthwash to rinse my teeth because it is hurts too much. I don't have good Medicaid dentist insurance, so I only go dentist one time a year. I have kidney stones because I can only eat some kinds of food. I am getting worse. Please please please pass SB 1294. Thank you.

January 27th, 3:10 P.M., Conference Room 225

Dear Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair Senate Committee on Human Services

Dear Honorable Senator Les Ihara, Jr. Vice Chair Senate Committee on Human Services

My name is Vaipapa Soliai and I am in support of SB 1294. I don't have any teeth and need more dentist appointments to help me get teeth. I am a person with disabilities that need support with my electric wheelchair. Please pass SB 1294. Thank you.

January 27th, 3:10 P.M., Conference Room 225

Dear Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair Senate Committee on Human Services

Dear Honorable Senator Les Ihara, Jr. Vice Chair Senate Committee on Human Services

My name is Amber Arakawa and I would like to tell you that I support SB 1294. I need more dentist Medicaid and do not want to lose my insurance.

January 27th, 3:10 P.M., Conference Room 225

Dear Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair Senate Committee on Human Services

Dear Honorable Senator Les Ihara, Jr. Vice Chair Senate Committee on Human Services

My name is Cheryl Derby and I support SB 1294. I am a person with a disability and want to have more appointments at my dentist.

January 27th, 3:10 P.M., Conference Room 225

Dear Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair Senate Committee on Human Services

Dear Honorable Senator Les Ihara, Jr. Vice Chair Senate Committee on Human Services

My name is Sol Ray Duncan and I want to see SB 1294 become law. I know I need to have more checkups at my dentist. I want to have clean teeth and strong teeth, and teeth that is not sore.

January 27th, 3:10 P.M., Conference Room 225

Dear Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair Senate Committee on Human Services

Dear Honorable Senator Les Ihara, Jr. Vice Chair Senate Committee on Human Services

My name is Celeste Kagimoto and I want SB 1294 to pass because I have a disability and I go to Lanakila Day program and need more dental help.

January 27th, 3:10 P.M., Conference Room 225

Dear Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair Senate Committee on Human Services

Dear Honorable Senator Les Ihara, Jr. Vice Chair Senate Committee on Human Services

My name is Paul Landingin and I want you to pass SB 1294. I think I need more checkups at the dentist. Sometimes my teeth are sore but I cannot go dentist because I am told I don't have any more insurance coverage. I don't know why. I tell my caregiver I have Medicaid, but I don't understand how come I cannot fix my teeth. Can you help me and my caregiver have more dentist fixing appointment?

January 27th, 3:10 P.M., Conference Room 225

Dear Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair Senate Committee on Human Services

Dear Honorable Senator Les Ihara, Jr. Vice Chair Senate Committee on Human Services

My name is Michael Lee and have a disability and I want to have more checkups on my teeth please. I want to have teeth that work good. I support SB 1294.

January 27th, 3:10 P.M., Conference Room 225

Dear Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair Senate Committee on Human Services

Dear Honorable Senator Les Ihara, Jr. Vice Chair Senate Committee on Human Services

My name is Ada McFeely and I need your help to pass SB 1294. I support SB 1294. Someone always call me a duck because my teeth and mouth cannot be fix. I want to change my teeth and mouth so no more duck calling in my life.

January 27th, 3:10 P.M., Conference Room 225

Dear Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair Senate Committee on Human Services

Dear Honorable Senator Les Ihara, Jr. Vice Chair Senate Committee on Human Services

My name is Ryan Nishikawa and I am person who has Down's Syndrome and support SB 1294. I am at Lanakila day program and I like my dentist, but only one time I can go in one year.

January 27th, 3:10 P.M., Conference Room 225

Dear Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair Senate Committee on Human Services

Dear Honorable Senator Les Ihara, Jr. Vice Chair Senate Committee on Human Services

My name is Johnelle Santos and I have a disability and I support SB 1294. I want to have pretty teeth too.

January 27th, 3:10 P.M., Conference Room 225

Dear Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair Senate Committee on Human Services

Dear Honorable Senator Les Ihara, Jr. Vice Chair Senate Committee on Human Services

My name is Zosimo Arista, I support SB 1294. I work with people who have Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities and hope that the Dental Medicaid shortages can be changed so as to see true health benefits to people with disabilities and statewide financial benefit savings, lowering emergency room visits for dental problems.

January 27th, 3:10 P.M., Conference Room 225

Dear Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair Senate Committee on Human Services

Dear Honorable Senator Les Ihara, Jr. Vice Chair Senate Committee on Human Services

My name is Michelle Muralt, I support SB 1294. I have Down's syndrome and help other friends who have disabilities to have a better life. I want to see us have more dentist visit to fix our teeth and have someplace where a dentist can fix our teeth and help us to have braces or to have retainers if we need them, or clean our teeth and make it straight again.

LATE

Committee on Human Service
Senator Russell E. Ruderman, Chair
Senator Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair

Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health
Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair

Testimony on Senate Bill 1294
Relating to Medicaid Benefits

Submitted by Dr. Steven Pine, DDS., Dental Director
January 10, 2022

I, Dr. Steven Pine, DDS, currently work as the Dental Director at West Hawaii Community Health Center, (WHCHC) and I strongly support Senate Bill 1294 which appropriates funds for the restoration of adult dental benefits to Medicaid patients.

At WHCHC we believe that oral health indicates much more than simply healthy teeth, as the mouth can be both a cause and a window to individual and population health and well-being. Oral health is critical to general health and well-being as the mouth is the gateway to the rest of the body, providing clues about overall health. It is sometimes the first place where signs and symptoms of other diseases are noticed. Causes of poor oral health are complex and access to dental care for adults is crucial for overall health and well-being. However, adults in West Hawaii are less likely to see a dentist than adults on average for the state. 35.6% of West Hawaii adults have had no dental care compared to the state rate of 29%.

Between 2016 and 2020, Medicaid recipients averaged 2,700 emergency room visits per year for acute oral health conditions, totaling \$21,700,000 in charges for outpatient emergency room services alone. Neighbor island ERS on Hawaii island and Kauai have higher rates of ER use for acute dental conditions. SB 2401 (Relating to Adult Medicaid Dental Benefits) has this updated information with preferred language changes over this 2021 version of the bill.

Limited coverage under option 1 would be capped per recipient and may only cover an annual exam, fluoride treatment, bi-annual cleanings, one set of bite wings radiographs per year and one non-emergency tooth extraction or filling per year. As a provider who actually treats patients, the dental needs of these patients far exceed this basic requirement.

The difference in State funding would be \$8,823,781 in state funds for option 2, versus \$3,466,328 in state funds for option 1. Federal funding from would provide the remainder of the costs of the benefits under the Federal Medicaid Assistance Percentage (FMAP).

Fiscal analysis also projects that over time, additional medical care cost savings estimates range from \$1.9 million per year to \$5.3 million due to health status improvements in cost-occurring acute and chronic diseases.

Research shows that adults who receive Medicaid frequently go without comprehensive oral treatment due to high treatment costs which must be paid for out-of-pocket (Hawaii Oral Health: Key Findings, 2015). A recent CDC report shows that the cost of treatment or lack of insurance was the main reason 42% of adults, 18-64 years of age, went without a dental visit for an oral health problem in the past 6 months. Consistent with national statistics that demonstrate disparity in dental care for the low-income vs high income adults, a recent survey on Hawaii Oral Health noted there are substantial dental health disparities in Hawaii. Adults with low income are more likely to have dental problems and less likely to see a dentist each year.

WHCHC provides care to the most under-served people in our community who have the most complicated health needs. Individuals with a range of chronic conditions are more susceptible to oral disease. Oral disease can also exacerbate chronic disease symptoms.

By passing this bill you will improve oral health outcomes for the most disadvantaged adults in our community. Providing adult dental services for those living in poverty will serve the public in the following ways:

- Reduce costs associated with emergency department visits for preventable oral health problems.

- Improve pregnancy outcomes for low- income women.
- Improve self-esteem, employability, decrease absenteeism, and improve mental health of disadvantaged adults.
- Improve chronic health condition for underserved and disadvantaged adults.
- Improve access to dental services for adults living in poverty.

For these reasons I strongly support **SB 1294** and would request the updated language provided in SB 2401. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Written Testimony for the
Senate Committee on Human Services

January 27, 2022

By

Jerris R. Hedges, MD

SB 1294 – RELATING TO MEDICAID BENEFITS.

Chair San Buenaventura, Vice-Chair Ihara and members of the committee:

My name is Jerris Hedges, and I serve as dean at the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM). In a former life, I was a practicing emergency physician and personally know the challenges that many on Medicaid must face to obtain needed dental services.

I am writing in **support** of SB 1294 which appropriates funds to restore diagnostic, preventive, and restorative dental benefits to adult Medicaid enrollees.

Oral disease is a significant health problem for many Hawaii residents, affecting their overall health and well-being. 223,438 adult Medicaid recipients have no diagnostic, preventive, or restorative dental coverage. In 2009, the State terminated all preventive and restorative dental care services for adult Medicaid recipients and reduced coverage to emergency-only care that is limited to pain relief, injuries, trauma, and tooth removal and extraction. The lack of preventive and restorative dentistry services for adult Medicaid beneficiaries increases potential health care complications for persons with co-existing chronic diseases, such as diabetes and heart disease. Poor oral health, combined with co-existing conditions like these, have been shown to lead to increased disability and death.

In Hawaii, a disproportionate number of adult Medicaid enrollees ages twenty-one to forty-four use the emergency department for their dental services. Between 2016-2020, 29,536 adults aged 21 and older visited the emergency department with a dental-related diagnosis, and forty-nine percent (49%) of these visits with a principal dental-related diagnosis were Medicaid recipients. On average during 2016-2020, Hawaii Medicaid enrollees made 2,700 emergency department visits per year for acute oral health conditions, totaling \$21,700,000 in charges for outpatient emergency services alone. Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders were disproportionately represented in these emergency department visits for dental-related diagnoses.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill.

SB-1294

Submitted on: 1/25/2022 11:08:53 PM

Testimony for HMS on 1/27/2022 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
pahnelopi mckenzie	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support SB1294. Dental care is a crucial part of health care. All digestion and ingestion of nutrition starts in our mouth with our teeth. Dental care should be provided through medicaid without question. Dental care is health care. Support SB 1294

SB-1294

Submitted on: 1/25/2022 8:01:26 PM

Testimony for HMS on 1/27/2022 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Marion Poirier	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Chair, Vice Chair and Members of the Committee on Human Services:

My name is Marion Poirier and this testimony is in strong support of SB1294. My career has been that of a Hawaii non-profit executive director; therefore, I know the population for which the bill is intended.

When people are on Medicaid there is no money for expensive dental care. Not only do these folks needlessly suffer physically and mentally, but they cannot seek meaningful employment.

Please be charitable and practical and pass this measure.

Thank you very much.

**TESTIMONY FOR SENATE BILL 1294
ADULT DENTAL BENEFITS; MEDICAID; APPROPRIATION**

Date of Hearing/Time:

January 27, 2022, 3:10 pm

Committee:

Committee on Human Services

January 26, 2022

Dear Chair Joy A. San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Les Ihara, Jr., and Committee members:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in very strong support on SB1294 relating to adult dental Medicaid benefits.

My name is Dr. Andrew Tseu and currently employed as a community center dentist. I am submitting testimony as a Hawaii resident. Hawaii's oral health services has not been given adequate attention and resources necessary to support good oral health care in our state since Medicaid adult dental benefits were drastically cut in 2009.


Oral Health is essential to overall health. Oral health is a crucial part of a person's physical, psychological, social and economic health and well-being. Extending dental coverage to patients with chronic health conditions like diabetes and heart disease can lead to cost savings in related areas of health care spending. Missing or broken teeth also create social barriers for adults to find and maintain gainful employment in our community.

We are currently one of only 13 states that provide emergency care only. As a result of our past decade of minimal coverage for dental care, Hawaii's emergency rooms have been overutilized for otherwise preventable dental conditions to the tune of thousands of visits per year, costing millions of dollars annually.

As a part of our commitment to improve oral health in Hawaii, we believe that basic coverage of dental services for adults is a critical factor in ensuring access to appropriate and timely oral health care.

Please feel free to contact me at (808) 781-3613 to discuss my testimony further.

Best regards,



Andrew Tseu, D.D.S., J.D.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES
Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair
Hearing Date: Thursday, January 27, 2022, 3:10PM

Re: SB 1294 - RELATING TO MEDICAID BENEFITS

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura and Members of the Committee,

My name is Linda Dorset, a citizen of Wailuku, Maui, and a member of AARP, and I am personally affected by this legislation because I recently lost my employer sponsored dental coverage due to retirement. I thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony regarding the above referenced legislation.

SB1294 Appropriating funds to restore diagnostic, preventive, and restorative dental benefits to adult Medicaid enrollees, which the State terminated and replaced with emergency room services limited to pain relief, injuries, and extraction. To not approve this seems to me to be cutting from essential services just when I and other retirees need them most. Especially since the lack of preventive and restorative dentistry services for adult Medicaid beneficiaries increases health care complications due to diabetes and heart disease.

Dental coverage is not mandated by Hawaii's Prepaid Health Care Act, and is not a covered benefit for adults under the Affordable Care Act, Medicare, or Medicaid

Research estimates potential medical care cost savings of \$1,900,000 to \$5,300,000 per year attributable to a reduction in emergency department visits for dental conditions and reduced medical care costs among Medicaid beneficiaries with diabetes and coronary artery disease.

Thank you for your attention

Linda Dorset

Date: January 24, 2022

To: The Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
The Honorable Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services

Re: **Strong Support for SB1294**, Relating to Medicaid Benefits

Hrg: Thursday, January 27, 2022 at 3:10 PM, Conference Room 225 & Videoconference

Aloha Senate Committee on Human Services,

As a healthcare professional and member of the East Hawaii community, I am writing in **strong support of SB1294**, which appropriates funds to restore diagnostic, preventive, and restorative dental benefits to adult Medicaid enrollees, provided the department of human services obtains maximum federal matching funds available and pursues all funding sources, including private grants, prior to expending any general fund appropriations.

Oral health is essential to overall health and well being. Extending dental coverage to adult Medicaid patients with chronic health conditions like diabetes and heart disease can lead to cost savings in related areas of health care spending.

Since adult Medicaid diagnostic, preventive and restorative dental services were eliminated in 2009 Hawaii has seen increased Emergency Room utilization and significantly increased costs for otherwise preventable oral health conditions.

Oral health inequity is an issue in Hawaii. Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander populations, and those on Neighbor Islands are at greater risk for poor oral health and limited access to oral health care.

Oral health is health and reinstating these benefits is a cost-effective, person-centered approach to improving overall health in our communities.

Please support reinstating adult dental Medicaid benefits.

I **strongly support SB512** and respectfully ask you to pass this bill out of committee.

Many thanks for your consideration,

Forrest Batz, PharmD
Keaau, HI

SB-1294

Submitted on: 1/25/2022 6:45:16 AM

Testimony for HMS on 1/27/2022 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Melanie Padgett	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Senators,

Thank you for proposing this very important bill. Dental care in Hawaii is too expensive and hard to access. Restoring medicaid dental benefits would help Hawaii's struggling families get the dental care they need to stay healthy. I wish you would introduce a bill that requires dental coverage to be included by all health insurance companies. It's crazy and cruel that the American health care system has always treated teeth as though they were not part of the human body and essential for life. This is a small step in rectifying this hug problem.

Melanie Padgett

572-8637

SB-1294

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 12:42:18 PM

Testimony for HMS on 1/27/2022 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Tom Simon	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

In addition to what's already stated about the benefits of adult dental care with medicaid in terms of reducing emergency care costs...

Some effects of POOR oral health include:

- Less employment, people are less likely to work and need more government assistance
- Poorer self-esteem and mental health
- Poorer diet and eating habits
- Increased incidence of systemic diseases (and their associated costs) such as heart disease (\$605 million of care needed reported back in 2005), diabetes (45% of our adult population have prediabetes and 11% have diabetes), and adverse pregnancy outcomes; largely through systemic inflammation arising from oral disease such as periodontal disease and dental caries.

Out of 50 states and Washington DC, Hawaiians have 5th lowest income when adjusted for cost of living. 80% of Americans in general, will delay dental care knowing it will cost them more in the long term. In today's society, people consider dental work to be discretionary spending, but given the importance of oral health on the overall health and well-being of adults it should be a higher priority.

The goal should be to restore function, tissue health, and within reason, esthetics. Oral cancer screenings are also vitally important and almost exclusively done by dental professionals. While expensive procedures such as endodontics are likely not realistic, regular check-ups, cleanings, fillings, extractions (before the need to visit the ER arises) and dentures are vital to the overall health and wellness of all adults in Hawaii.

SB-1294

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 2:59:38 PM

Testimony for HMS on 1/27/2022 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Joshua Boutney	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support this bill thank you

Aloha Senators: San Buenaventura, Acasio, Kanuha, Misalucha, Gabbard, Inouye, Kidani, Kim, Nishihara, Riviere, Shimabukuro, and Taniguchi

My name is Randelle Lee.

Thank you for this chance to provide testimony in support for SB1294.

LATE

I am from Waimea Easterseals Kauai.

SB1294 will support adults to obtain dental care.

I keep myself healthy by going to the dentist twice a year to prevent emergency dental problems.

With no coverage for dental care, my parents pay for my dental services.

The only (DD dedicated) clinic that is available for me is on the island of Oahu which adds cost to pay for air fare.

Thank you for allowing me to speak.

LATE

SB-1294

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 7:09:26 AM

Testimony for HMS on 1/27/2022 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Rachel DiPasquale	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Chair, Vice Chair and Members of the senate Committee on Human Services,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 1294, Relating to Medicaid Benefits.

In 2009, drastic cuts to adult Medicaid Dental benefits were made to eliminate diagnostic, preventive and restorative services, leaving only emergency services available. Hawaii is currently one of only 13 states that provide emergency services only. Since then, we've seen increased emergency room utilization and increased costs related to otherwise preventable conditions.

Between 2016 and 2020, Medicaid recipients averaged 2,700 ER visits per year for acute oral health conditions, totaling \$21,700,000. When cost breakdown per ER visit is calculated, one goal would be to prevent these high cost ER visits and focus on diagnostic, preventive and restorative care for our adult Medicaid population. What is important to note is that these cost savings may range from \$1.9 -5.3 million per year due to health status improvements.

Currently, most states offer adult Medicaid recipients preventive and restorative dental benefits. By adding a comprehensive or limited diagnostic, preventative and restorative benefit, Hawaii's adult Medicaid population should be able to experience fewer dental related ER visits, with improvements to chronic disease risks and overall improvement in health status. Broader adult Medicaid Dental benefits would not only support individual health and wellbeing among Hawaii's most vulnerable adults, but could also improve the employment status and socio-economic strength of our communities.

Nothing can beat the functionality of a natural tooth in the mouth, from their chewing capability to lip posture, phoenetics to esthetics, our teeth serve basic biologic functions. Evolutionarily, our teeth have been created for incising, grinding and macerating our food to aid in digestion and absorption of essential nutrients for our survival. The placement of our teeth aid in lip posture and phonetics and keep our faces looking healthy. Esthetically, teeth can even help us with finding a job or winning someone over with a smile.

To remove teeth that are able to be maintained in the mouth with a filling or root canal is what patients with adult medicaid coverage have had to do since 2009. Please support this bill so our population is able to maintain natural functionality of their teeth.

Date of hearing: 1.27.2022

Bill #:SB1294

Committee on Human Services

Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair

Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair and Committee members,

LATE

My name is Anne Hvizdak. I am writing in **support of SB 1294** to restore dental benefits for Medicaid recipients. I work for an organization that provides Home and Community Based Service for Adults with Developmental Disabilities. The organization, Easterseals Hawaii, has also provided testimony in support of this bill. I am a retired dental hygienist that has worked in a variety of private practice and public health settings. In the state I practiced in, as a Medicaid provider, I provided oral health services for underserved individuals in a variety of settings from young children to older adults. Many of the older citizens that I had provided care for had not had services in many years.

All citizens regardless of age need adequate access to oral health services to support oral health as an integral part of maintaining a person's general health. Many chronic diseases have a direct link to poor oral health. It is admirable that Hawaii invests in children's oral health, but adult oral health needs are just as important if not more important as a person ages.

I serve as a voluntary member of the Hawaii Oral Health Coalition (HOHC) which has provided comprehensive testimony on this subject. The HOHC and supporting organizations have demonstrated the cost of not providing care is still a cost the state must bear. Using state resources to cover expenditures like emergency room visits for unmet dental care needs does not address the root cause of the problem. Negative health outcomes from chronic diseases like diabetes and cardiovascular disease add to the burden of overall costs to the state. Adults that I work with in the HCBS program are predisposed to poor health outcomes due to their developmental disability. Having limited access to dental services has created increased health risk for them. Many families are unable to pay for out-of-pocket costs for dental care.

In discussions with the Kauai legislative members, they have acknowledged that lack of dental coverage is a significant issue. If this bill was passed, it would also provide opportunity for many dental health practitioners to expand opportunities to underserved areas and serve as support for measures currently being discussed such as tele-dentistry opportunities. I hope that this committee will advance this bill for a vote and support the measure.

Mahalo for your consideration:

Anne Hvizdak, BSDH, CDHC

669 Aewa St.

Eleele, HI 96705

Hvizdak11@gmail.com

LATE

SB-1294

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 11:59:49 AM
Testimony for HMS on 1/27/2022 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Susan Pcola_Davis	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support this measure. Medicare recipients have high out of pocket expenses for dental needs as explained in this bill.

Affordability is the issue. The older we get, the more dental issues we face.

I will be spending close to over \$5000 for one implant this year. This cost covers the periodontal to implant the screw, X-Rays and the to your regular dentist to put the crown on. For a fixed income individual coming up with the balance will be difficult. So my tooth has been removed, bone graft almost healed, tomorrow is the

X-Ray (\$300+) to ensure the correct depth for the screw so it doesn't hit a nerve. After tomorrow's result, we go from there.

Some may ask, why don't you just get false teeth? They are more affordable. Yes, they are. But they are NOTHING like having a real tooth, which is what an implant does. The surrounding teeth also get stronger. It's hard to imagine unless you've had an implant. Some of you may have.

This is only one example for passing this measure.

SB-1294

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 12:04:46 PM

Testimony for HMS on 1/27/2022 3:10:00 PM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Don Sand	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

A dentist's testimony, Dr. Don Sand, 54-135 Honomu place, Hauula, HI 96717

Every person living in Hawaii deserves a healthy smile, enough teeth for chewing nutritious food, and to have their mouth free of pain, infection, and disease.

My name is Dr. Don Sand DDS. I have been working in the community health system of Hawaii for the last 7 years. In my 30-year career I have never seen so many deserving people suffer from the lack of dental care.

Oral health is the only disease in our modern times that is both preventable and curable. When dental care is not available to the majority of our population have untreated oral health that result in many collateral problems affecting a person's health, suffering/pain, mental health, low self-esteem, social isolation and a loss of personal financial health.

Dental infections not only result in unnecessary ER visits, but patients with chronic tooth and gums diseases are not able to chew food properly. This lack of nutrition results in exacerbating many whole-body diseases and results in poor immune systems. Untreated tooth and gum infections may result in cardiovascular diseases, systemic infections and may result in death.

Without dental treatment our people cannot be competitive to get a job when they have no teeth to smile with in an interview. Having shame of their bad teeth results in loss of needed socializing needed to maintain emotional and mental health. Without adult Medicaid many deserving people and Kupuna continue to have teeth that could be saved become lost without insurance to help the costs to repair their teeth.

With a compassionate adult Medicaid plan an early diagnosis and early dental treatment can resolve problems that are small they often be fixed with very little cost. If easy treatment is unavailable then often there are huge costs from deferring dental treatment. One good example, is when one small cavity if fixed early it could be a low-cost treatment such as a simple filling. But if untreated this simple problem will continue to damage the tooth and could result in a root canal, a crown, a gum surgery that could cost \$3,000 or more when scaled to private practice fees. If the finances are not be available at that point then the tooth is most often removed. Without adult Medicaid there are minimal provisions helping adults even replace the missing

teeth. This sad scenario can be repeated as 32 nightmares for the patient as each tooth that can be saved is lost. With the loss of teeth our people of Hawaii lose self-esteem, the ability to get nutrition, lose job opportunities, lose social opportunities and they lose the joy of being pain free and they lose elements of quality life.

Having a health smile is worth millions for each deserving adult and should be considered as a human right. If there is one big thing that we can could do within our influence and leave a humanitarian legacy, let's us look at reinstating Adult Medicaid as the single best return in investment towards restoring the priceless oral health and well-being of our Island people.

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SB-1294

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 12:30:28 PM
Testimony for HMS on 1/27/2022 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Erica Yamauchi	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support SB1294, which is critical for our kupuna. In order to cover diagnostic, preventive, and restorative dental benefits to adult Medicaid enrollees, we need to pass this bill urgently.

Erica Yamauchi, Kaimikī/Wilhelmina Rise