
A BILL FOR AN ACT

MAKING AN APPROPRIATION TO RESTORE BASIC ADULT DENTAL BENEFITS
TO MEDICAID ENROLLEES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that in response to the
2 State's receipt of a failing grade of "F" in a series of recent
3 oral health report cards released by The Pew Center on the
4 States, a more concerted effort needs to be made to address oral
5 health in Hawaii, especially in underserved communities.

6 According to the department of health in its "Hawaii Oral
7 Health: Key Findings" report of September 25, 2015:

8 (1) Eighty-two per cent of high-income adults in Hawaii
9 see a dentist each year, as compared to only fifty-two
10 per cent of low-income adults;

11 (2) Fifty-one per cent of low-income adults lost teeth due
12 to dental disease, compared to only thirty-two per
13 cent of high-income adults;

14 (3) Only forty-one per cent of pregnant women in Hawaii
15 reported seeing a dentist during their pregnancy from
16 2009 to 2011, with low-income women and women in the



1 medicaid program among the lowest estimated groups of
2 receiving care;

3 (4) In 2012, there were more than three thousand emergency
4 room visits due to preventable dental problems,
5 representing a sixty-seven per cent increase from
6 2006, significantly higher than the national average,
7 and these visits accounted for \$8,500,000 in total
8 expenditures by the State, more than double the
9 \$4,000,000 spent in 2006; and

10 (5) Only eleven per cent of Hawaii's residents receive
11 fluoridated drinking water, as compared to seventy-
12 five per cent for the United States as a whole.

13 The legislature finds that these figures represent that
14 oral health in the State is a pervasive and expensive public
15 health crisis that needs to be addressed, especially in low-
16 income and underserved populations.

17 In response to these glaring disparities and inadequacies,
18 the department of health posited eight key strategies for
19 rebuilding the State's dental public health infrastructure,
20 including:



- 1 (1) Continuing to support and expand affordable and
2 accessible preventive dental care services to Hawaii's
3 low-income populations;
- 4 (2) Expanding medicaid dental services for adults beyond
5 the current coverage for "emergencies only" to include
6 preventive and treatment services;
- 7 (3) Considering increasing reimbursements to dental
8 providers for key preventive or restorative procedures
9 to increase participation in medicaid; and
- 10 (4) Developing strategies to reduce barriers to finding
11 and receiving preventive dental care services for
12 children enrolled in the medicaid program.

13 The legislature finds that it is in the best interest of the
14 State to expand access to coverage by restoring basic adult
15 dental benefits to medicaid enrollees.

16 The legislature further finds that the State's federally
17 matched medicaid program forms an essential support for
18 underserved individuals by offering insurance options for low-
19 income citizens, in addition to other social service programs.

20 The legislature further finds that restoring basic adult dental
21 benefits would be in line with the intent of the department of



1 health, allowing for individuals to eat properly, work
2 productively, improve mental health well-being, and increase
3 attendance and participation in school.

4 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to appropriate
5 funds to restore basic adult dental benefits to medicaid
6 enrollees.

7 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
8 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much
9 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2017-2018 and
10 \$ or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year
11 2018-2019 to restore basic adult dental benefits to medicaid
12 enrollees. The department of human services shall obtain the
13 maximum federal matching funds available for this expenditure.

14 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
15 of human services for the purposes of this Act.

16 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2070.



Report Title:

Medicaid; Adult Dental Benefits; Appropriation

Description:

Appropriates funds to the Department of Human Services (DHS) to restore basic adult dental benefits to Medicaid enrollees. Requires DHS to obtain the maximum federal matching funds available for this expenditure. (SB27 HD1)

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