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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES.

**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 oral  
14   health in the State is a pervasive and expensive public health  
15   crisis that needs to be addressed, especially in low-income and  
16   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  
14 the 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 2018-2019 to restore  
10 basic adult dental benefits to medicaid enrollees. The  
11 department of human services shall obtain the maximum federal  
12 matching funds available for this expenditure.

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

15 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 3000.



**Report Title:**

Medicaid; Adult Dental Benefits; Appropriation

**Description:**

Appropriates funds to DHS to restore basic adult dental benefits to Medicaid enrollees. Requires DHS to obtain the maximum federal matching funds available for this expenditure. (HB2152 HD1)

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