

---

---

# HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

URGING THE GOVERNOR AND THE DIRECTOR OF HUMAN SERVICES TO  
REINSTATE RESTORATIVE AND PREVENTATIVE DENTAL MEDICAID  
COVERAGE FOR ADULT BENEFICIARIES IN THE STATE OF HAWAII.

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

7  
8           WHEREAS, according to the Department of Health in its  
9 "Hawaii Oral Health: Key Findings" report of September 25, 2015:

- 10  
11           (1) Eighty-two percent of high-income adults in Hawaii see  
12 a dentist each year, as compared to only fifty-two  
13 percent of low-income adults;  
14  
15           (2) Fifty-one percent of low-income adults lost teeth due  
16 to dental disease, compared to only thirty-two percent  
17 of high-income adults;  
18  
19           (3) Only forty-one percent of pregnant women in Hawaii  
20 reported seeing a dentist during their pregnancy from  
21 2009 to 2011, with low-income women and women in the  
22 medicaid program among the lowest estimated groups of  
23 receiving care;  
24  
25           (4) In 2012, there were more than three thousand emergency  
26 room visits due to preventable dental problems,  
27 representing a sixty-seven percent increase from 2006,  
28 significantly higher than the national average, and  
29 these visits accounted for \$8,500,000 in total



expenditures by the State, more than double the \$4,000,000 spent in 2006; and

- (5) Only eleven percent of Hawaii's residents receive fluoridated drinking water, as compared to seventy-five percent for the United States as a whole; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature asserts that these figures represent that oral health in the State is a pervasive and expensive public health crisis that needs to be addressed, especially in low-income and underserved populations; and

WHEREAS, in response to these glaring disparities and inadequacies, the Department of Health posited eight key strategies for rebuilding the State's dental public health infrastructure, including:

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

WHEREAS, the Legislature believes that it is in the best interest of the State to expand access to coverage by restoring basic adult dental benefits to medicaid enrollees; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature further finds that the State's Federally matched medicaid program forms an essential support for underserved individuals by offering insurance options for low-income citizens, in addition to other social service programs; and



1 WHEREAS, restoring basic adult dental benefits would be in  
2 line with the intent of the Department of Health, allowing for  
3 individuals to eat properly, work productively, improve mental  
4 health well-being, and increase attendance and participation in  
5 school; and

6  
7 WHEREAS, funding for Hawaii's medicaid program is under the  
8 auspices of the Department of Human Services, not the Department  
9 of Health; and

10  
11 WHEREAS, the entire medicaid program is funded in a single  
12 line item in the Executive Budget, General Appropriations Act of  
13 2017, Session Laws of Hawaii (SLH) 2017; and

14  
15 WHEREAS, the objective of this line item is to "ensure that  
16 qualified low-income and disabled individuals and families are  
17 provided health care services, including medical, dental,  
18 hospital, nursing home, home and community-based, and other  
19 professional services, either through a fee-for-service or  
20 QUEST-managed care program."; and

21  
22 WHEREAS, in addition to general funds, special funds,  
23 federal funds, other federal funds, and interdepartmental  
24 transfers were appropriated into the General Appropriations Act  
25 of 2017; and

26  
27 WHEREAS, in 2018, the Department of Human Services  
28 requested \$4,704,480 in general funds, and \$7,066,720 in federal  
29 funds for fiscal year 2019, to restore adult dental medicaid  
30 benefits, including preventative and restorative oral health  
31 services; and

32  
33 WHEREAS, \$4,704,480 in general funds requested is less than  
34 one-half of one percent of the \$944,108,598 in general funds  
35 that had already been appropriated into General Appropriations  
36 Act of 2017; and

37  
38 WHEREAS, accordingly, the Legislature asserts that adult  
39 dental medicaid benefits can be restored without the  
40 appropriation of additional funds if the Department of Human  
41 Services can achieve cost savings of less than one-half of one  
42 percent of the current appropriation for the General  
43 Appropriations Act of 2017; and



1 WHEREAS, the Legislature also acknowledges that the  
2 governor has significant discretionary authority to shift funds  
3 for budgeting purposes; and  
4

5 WHEREAS, among other things, the governor could transfer  
6 surplus general funds to the General Appropriations Act of 2017  
7 to supplement the operational funds for medicaid; and  
8

9 WHEREAS, according to the governor's six-year financial  
10 plan, it is estimated that the State will experience a general  
11 fund surplus of between \$654,900,000 and \$829,100,000 for fiscal  
12 year 2019; and  
13

14 WHEREAS, the total funding requested to reinstate adult  
15 dental medicaid benefits of \$11,771,200 amounts to between 1.4  
16 and 1.7 percent of the estimated general fund carry-over  
17 balance; now, therefore,  
18

19 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the  
20 Twenty-ninth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session  
21 of 2018, the Senate concurring, that the Governor and the  
22 Director of Human Services are urged to reinstate restorative  
23 and preventative dental coverage for adult medicaid  
24 beneficiaries within its current budget appropriation found in  
25 the General Appropriations Act of 2017; and  
26

27 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Director of Human Services  
28 is requested to submit a report to the Legislature at least  
29 twenty days prior to the convening of the regular session of  
30 2019 that includes, but is not limited to:  
31

- 32 (1) The number of adult medicaid recipients receiving  
33 restorative and preventative dental benefits; and  
34
- 35 (2) A projection of the number of eligible adult medicaid  
36 beneficiaries who would be eligible to receive  
37 restorative and preventative dental benefits during  
38 fiscal biennium 2019-2020; and  
39

40 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
41 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, the  
42 Directors of Human Services, Health, and Finance, and the Chief  
43 Executive Officer of the Hawaii Primary Care Association.

