
HOUSE 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
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8 WHEREAS, according to the Department of Health in its
9 "Hawaii Oral Health: Key Findings" report of September 25, 2015:
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- 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;
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- 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;
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- 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;
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- 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
30 expenditures by the State, more than double the
31 \$4,000,000 spent in 2006; and
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- 1 (5) Only eleven percent of Hawaii's residents receive
2 fluoridated drinking water, as compared to seventy-
3 five percent for the United States as a whole; and
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5 WHEREAS, the Legislature asserts that these figures
6 represent that oral health in the State is a pervasive and
7 expensive public health crisis that needs to be addressed,
8 especially in low-income and underserved populations; and
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10 WHEREAS, in response to these glaring disparities and
11 inadequacies, the Department of Health posited eight key
12 strategies for rebuilding the State's dental public health
13 infrastructure, including:
14

- 15 (1) Continuing to support and expand affordable and
16 accessible preventive dental care services to Hawaii's
17 low-income populations;
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19 (2) Expanding medicaid dental services for adults beyond
20 the current coverage for "emergencies only" to include
21 preventive and treatment services;
22
23 (3) Considering increasing reimbursements to dental
24 providers for key preventive or restorative procedures
25 to increase participation in medicaid; and
26
27 (4) Developing strategies to reduce barriers to finding
28 and receiving preventive dental care services for
29 children enrolled in the medicaid program; and
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31 WHEREAS, the Legislature believes that it is in the best
32 interest of the State to expand access to coverage by restoring
33 basic adult dental benefits to medicaid enrollees; and
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35 WHEREAS, the Legislature further finds that the State's
36 Federally matched medicaid program forms an essential support
37 for underserved individuals by offering insurance options for
38 low-income citizens, in addition to other social service
39 programs; and
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41 WHEREAS, restoring basic adult dental benefits would be in
42 line with the intent of the Department of Health, allowing for



1 individuals to eat properly, work productively, improve mental
2 health well-being, and increase attendance and participation in
3 school; and
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5 WHEREAS, funding for Hawaii's medicaid program is under the
6 auspices of the Department of Human Services, not the Department
7 of Health; and
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9 WHEREAS, the entire medicaid program is funded in a single
10 line item in the Executive Budget, General Appropriations Act of
11 2017, Session Laws of Hawaii (SLH) 2017; and
12

13 WHEREAS, the objective of this line item is to "ensure that
14 qualified low-income and disabled individuals and families are
15 provided health care services, including medical, dental,
16 hospital, nursing home, home and community-based, and other
17 professional services, either through a fee-for-service or
18 QUEST-managed care program."; and
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20 WHEREAS, in addition to general funds, special funds,
21 federal funds, other federal funds, and interdepartmental
22 transfers were appropriated into the General Appropriations Act
23 of 2017; and
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25 WHEREAS, in 2018, the Department of Human Services
26 requested \$4,704,480 in general funds, and \$7,066,720 in federal
27 funds for fiscal year 2019, to restore adult dental medicaid
28 benefits, including preventative and restorative oral health
29 services; and
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31 WHEREAS, \$4,704,480 in general funds requested is less than
32 one-half of one percent of the \$944,108,598 in general funds
33 that had already been appropriated into General Appropriations
34 Act of 2017; and
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36 WHEREAS, accordingly, the Legislature asserts that adult
37 dental medicaid benefits can be restored without the
38 appropriation of additional funds if the Department of Human
39 Services can achieve cost savings of less than one-half of one
40 percent of the current appropriation for the General
41 Appropriations Act of 2017; and
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1 WHEREAS, the Legislature also acknowledges that the
2 governor has significant discretionary authority to shift funds
3 for budgeting purposes; and
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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
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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
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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,
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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, that the Governor and the Director of Human Services
22 are urged to reinstate restorative and preventative dental
23 coverage for adult medicaid beneficiaries within its current
24 budget appropriation found in the General Appropriations Act of
25 2017; and
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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:
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- 32 (1) The number of adult medicaid recipients receiving
33 restorative and preventative dental benefits; and
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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
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40 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
41 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, the Directors of



- 1 Human Services, Health, and Finance, and the Chief Executive
- 2 Officer of the Hawaii Primary Care Association.

