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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO ORAL HEALTH.

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

- 1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the State recently  
2 received a failing grade in a series of oral health report cards  
3 released by The Pew Center on the States. The legislature  
4 further finds that, according to the department of health's  
5 Hawaii Oral Health: Key Findings report released in August 2015:
- 6           (1) From 2009 to 2011, only:
- 7                 (A) Forty-one per cent of all pregnant women;  
8                 (B) Twenty-nine per cent of pregnant low-income  
9                 women; and
- 10              (C) Twenty-seven per cent of pregnant women on  
11              medicaid or QUEST;  
12              visited a dentist during their pregnancy;
- 13           (2) In 2012:
- 14                 (A) Only fifty-two per cent of low-income adults saw  
15                 a dentist, while eighty-two per cent of high-  
16                 income adults did so;



1           (B) Fifty-one per cent of low-income adults lost  
2           teeth due to dental disease, while only thirty-  
3           two per cent of high-income adults did so;  
4           (C) There were more than three thousand emergency  
5           room visits due to preventable dental problems,  
6           sixty-seven per cent more than in 2006, and  
7           significantly more than the national average. As  
8           a result, aggregate hospital charges for dental  
9           emergency visits were \$8,500,000, compared to  
10          \$4,000,000 in 2006, due in part to the increased  
11          number of visits.

12          The legislature further finds that these figures represent  
13          that oral health in the State is in a pervasive and expensive  
14          public health crisis. The State needs to make a more concerted  
15          effort to address oral health in Hawaii, especially among low-  
16          income and underserved populations. The legislature further  
17          finds that the department of health has identified multiple key  
18          strategies that, if implemented, could improve the oral health  
19          of Hawaii's residents. Among these strategies are proposals to:



1 (1) Continue to support and expand affordable and  
2 accessible preventive dental care services to Hawaii's  
3 low-income populations; and

4 (2) Expand medicaid dental services for adults beyond the  
5 limited current coverage for emergencies to include  
6 preventive and treatment services.

7 The legislature further finds that it is in the best  
8 interest of the State to expand access to coverage by restoring  
9 basic adult dental benefits to medicaid and QUEST integration  
10 enrollees. The State's federally matched medicaid and QUEST  
11 integration programs form an essential support for underserved  
12 individuals by offering insurance options for low-income  
13 citizens, in addition to other social service programs. The  
14 restoration of basic adult dental benefits would be consistent  
15 with the powers and duties of the department of human services.  
16 When individuals are no longer burdened by poor oral health,  
17 they can eat properly, work more productively, and devote more  
18 concentration to everyday tasks.

19 The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds to restore  
20 basic adult dental benefits to medicaid and QUEST integration  
21 enrollees.

1 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general  
2 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much  
3 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2016-2017 to restore  
4 basic adult dental benefits to medicaid and Hawaii QUEST  
5 integration enrollees.

6 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of  
7 human services for the purposes of this section; provided that  
8 the department of human services shall obtain the maximum amount  
9 of federal matching funds available for this expenditure.

10 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2112.



**Report Title:**

Oral Health; Dental Benefits; Medicaid and QUEST Integration  
Enrollees; Appropriation

**Description:**

Appropriates funds to the department of human services to  
restore basic adult dental benefits to medicaid and QUEST  
integration enrollees. (HB1772 HD2)

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not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

