
HOUSE RESOLUTION

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES TO CONDUCT A FULL STUDY ON THE REIMPLEMENTATION OF ADULT DENTAL BENEFITS FOR HAWAII RESIDENTS WHO ARE MEDICAID ENROLLEES AND TO SUBMIT A REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE.

1 WHEREAS, the Legislature finds that oral disease is a
2 significant health problem among many Hawaii residents,
3 affecting their overall health and well-being; and
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5 WHEREAS, access to regular oral health care varies greatly
6 across the State, with rural and neighbor island residents and
7 low-income families experiencing greater access issues; and
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9 WHEREAS, lack of access to dental coverage and oral health
10 care is a social justice issue that disproportionately affects
11 the poor, children, the elderly, and racial and ethnic minority
12 groups; and
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14 WHEREAS, poor oral health can negatively impact an
15 individual's health and self-image; and
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17 WHEREAS, poor oral health has been linked to an array of
18 acute and chronic health conditions, including heart disease,
19 diabetes, stroke, depression, low birth weight, and premature
20 birth; and
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22 WHEREAS, untreated dental disease can result in a loss of
23 productivity in the work place due to absenteeism, under-
24 employment, and unemployment; and
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26 WHEREAS, having dental benefits is a key factor in an
27 individual's ability to access dental care; and
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29 WHEREAS, the prevalence of dental disease and tooth loss is
30 disproportionately high among low-income populations which
31 include many individuals enrolled in Medicaid; and



1 WHEREAS, insufficient coverage or access to dental care
2 often further disadvantages Medicaid recipients, potentially
3 leading to worse health outcomes and higher costs; and
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5 WHEREAS, nationally, studies have shown that reducing or
6 eliminating Medicaid adult dental benefits has led to
7 significant increases in dental-related emergency room visits
8 and associated costs; and
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10 WHEREAS, it has been nearly a decade since the State
11 removed all but emergency Medicaid adult dental benefits, and
12 the Legislature finds that it is in the best interest of its
13 residents to consider restoring dental benefits, including
14 diagnostic, preventive, and restorative dental benefits, and to
15 expand access to care for adult Medicaid enrollees; now,
16 therefore,
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18 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
19 Thirtieth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of
20 2019, that this body urges the Department of Human Services to
21 conduct a full study on the reimplementation of adult dental
22 benefits for Hawaii residents who are Medicaid enrollees; and
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24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study include:
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- 26 (1) A range of adult Medicaid dental benefit options
27 including coverage of basic, comprehensive, population
28 specific benefits and coverage offered by other states
29 for diagnostic, preventive, and restorative dental
30 services; and
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- 32 (2) The estimated cost to the Hawaii Medicaid program for
33 each option, including costs that qualify for federal
34 matching funds; and
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- 36 (3) A projection, to the best of the Department of Human
37 Services' ability, of the long-term financial benefit
38 of reimplementing adult dental benefits; and
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- 40 (4) Feedback from the community and stakeholders; and
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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Human
2 Services is requested to submit a report of its findings and
3 recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the
4 Legislature no later than 20 days before the convening of the
5 Regular Session of 2020; and

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7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
8 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Director of Human
9 Services, and Director of Health.

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12 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Director of Human
13 Services, and Director of Health.

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