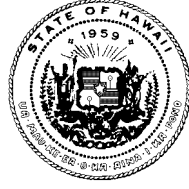


DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

February 22, 2022

TO: The Honorable Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
House Committee on Finance

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 1754 HD1 – RELATING TO ADULT DENTAL MEDICAID BENEFITS.**

Hearing: Thursday, February 24, 2022, 2:00 p.m.
Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the intent of this measure to fund the restoration of adult dental benefits for the Medicaid program. However, we respectfully request that the Legislature consider adding the appropriation to the executive budget. The Governor's budget priorities include funding for the restoration of a basic adult dental benefit of preventive, diagnostic, and some restorative dental services.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this measure is to appropriate funds to restore diagnostic, preventive, and restorative dental benefits to adult Medicaid enrollees. Effective date, July 1, 2060 (HD1). The HD1 amended the measure by:

- (1) Deleting the preamble other than the narrow purpose statement of this measure; and
- (2) Changing the effective date to July 1, 2060, to encourage further discussion.

The Department appreciates and supports the restoration of oral health benefits for adult Medicaid beneficiaries. The currently limited benefit of emergency-only coverage does not support the goals of whole-person care. Lack of access to preventive oral health care can

have a negative impact on a person’s health, especially for individuals with chronic diseases, pregnant women, and the health of their newborns.

In 2020, DHS Med-QUEST Division (MQD) with the Health Policy Institute of the American Dental Association (HPI ADA) released a study that updated cost estimates for the restoration of the adult dental benefit. MQD identified three coverage options, ranging from a basic dental coverage option to a comprehensive option.

Option 1. Limited dental benefit focused only on prevention and oral disease control (dental procedures such as diagnostics (x-rays), cleanings, and fillings).

Option 2. Basic dental benefit focused on oral disease control and some restoration of chewing functions (diagnostics, cleanings, fillings, some root canals, some crowns, and some dentures).

Option 3. Comprehensive coverage that includes most dental procedures with some limits.

Since the study was released in 2020, adult beneficiaries have increased substantially.

Accordingly, the costs of each option increased. The updated costs are below:

	Option 1 (Gov recommended)	Option 2	Option 3
Total Cost	10,195,082	25,952,297	47,384,075
Federal Funds	6,728,754	17,128,516	31,273,490
State Funds	3,466,328	8,823,781	16,110,586

The measure does not specify a preference for a partial or full restoration of the adult dental benefits. However, the executive budget includes \$10,195,082 (\$3,466,328 A funds/\$6,728,754 N funds) to restore basic dental services for adult Medicaid beneficiaries, which is the equivalent of Option 1: Limited dental benefit focused only on prevention and oral disease control (e.g., dental procedures such as diagnostics (x-rays), cleanings, and fillings).

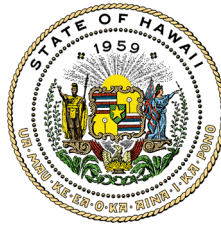
Lastly, if an appropriation is forthcoming, we respectfully request that the Legislature consider adding the appropriation to the executive budget. Including an appropriation via this measure would only be a one-time appropriation, which would not support the necessary continuity of an adult dental program. Further, as any private grants or other funding sources

are unknown, the Department requests that the appropriation amount for the entire amount of state funds needed for whichever dental benefit option is preferred.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this bill.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII

ELIZABETH A. CHAR, M.D.
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH



CAROLINE CADIRAO
DIRECTOR

Telephone
(808) 586-0100

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STATE OF HAWAII
EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON AGING
NO. 1 CAPITOL DISTRICT
250 SOUTH HOTEL STREET, SUITE 406
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-2831

**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB1754 HD1
Relating to Adult Dental Medicaid Benefits**

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
REPRESENTATIVE SYLVIA LUKE, CHAIR
REPRESENTATIVE KYLE T. YAMASHITA, VICE CHAIR

Testimony of Caroline Cadirao
Director, Executive Office on Aging
Attached Agency to the Department of Health

Hearing Date: February 24, 2022
2:00 p.m.

Room Number: 308
Via Videoconference

1 **EOA's Position:** The Executive Office on Aging (EOA), an attached agency to the Department
2 of Health, supports HB1754 HD1, Relating to Adult Dental Medicaid Benefits.

3 **Fiscal Implications:** This measure appropriates state funds to the Department of Human
4 Services to restore diagnostic, preventive, and restorative dental benefits to adult Medicaid
5 enrollees; provided that the department obtain the maximum federal matching funds available for
6 this expenditure as well as pursue all funding sources prior to expending any general revenues
7 appropriated.

8 **Purpose and Justification:** The purpose of this bill is to expand access to care by restoring
9 dental benefits to adult Medicaid enrollees. In 2009, the State eliminated all adult dental benefits
10 to Medicaid clients except emergency dental. Since then, EOA's long-term care disability
11 specialist, Mr. Philip Ana, has received calls from the disability and aging community looking
12 for assistance for necessary dental work. Often, the dental work required surgery and

1 replacement of dentures. In the meantime, the individual had difficulty eating. Mr. Ana looks for
2 free or low-cost services and a willing provider. While he may be able to find a dental provider
3 who is willing to volunteer their time, the cost of testing and materials is not free. Restoring
4 dental benefits to Medicaid enrollees is definitely needed. Poor oral health, combined with co-
5 existing chronic diseases, have been shown to lead to increased disability and death.

6 **Recommendation:** EOA supports this measure provided that its enactment does not reduce or
7 replace priorities with the Administration's budget request.

8 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



ELIZABETH A. CHAR, M.D.
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH

STATE OF HAWAII
STATE COUNCIL
ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
PRINCESS VICTORIA KAMĀMALU BUILDING
1010 RICHARDS STREET, Room 122
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
TELEPHONE: (808) 586-8100 FAX: (808) 586-7543
February 24, 2022

The Honorable Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
House Committee on Finance
The Thirty-First Legislature
State Capitol
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Representative Luke and Committee members:

SUBJECT: HB1754 HD1 Relating to Adult Dental Medicaid Benefits

The Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities **STRONGLY SUPPORTS SB1754 HD1** which appropriates funds to restore diagnostic, preventive, and restorative dental benefits to adult Medicaid enrollees.

The Council cannot emphasize the importance of dental care services that include preventive, restorative, prosthetic, and emergency services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We are all aware of how oral health, or the lack thereof, affects all aspects (emotional, psychological, and social) of our lives. Numerous individuals can share with you their experience of having a tooth or teeth extracted or acquiring severe health problems because necessary dental services were not available because of the termination of the Medicaid adult dental benefit coverage in 2008. Compounding these issues is the limited number of dentists on the Neighbor Islands who are available and willing to serve Medicaid enrollees.

Not only does lack of preventative oral care affect one's overall health. It profoundly impacts these individuals' abilities to obtain gainful employment. It is hard to have self-confidence during an interview when you are missing teeth or have poor dental care. Many individuals with intellectual and or developmental disabilities are already at a disadvantage within our current job market; our population does not need poor dental care to add to this issue.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **strong support of HB1754 HD1**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daintry Bartoldus".

Daintry Bartoldus
Executive Administrator



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Finance
Thursday, February 24, 2022 at 2:00 p.m.

By

Jerris Hedges, MD, Dean and
Lee Buenconsejo-Lum, MD, FAAFP
Associate Dean for Academic Affairs & DIO, UH JABSOM
John A. Burns School of Medicine

And

Michael Bruno, PhD
Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 1754 HD1 – RELATING TO ADULT DENTAL MEDICAID BENEFITS

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today. The John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) supports HB 1754 HD1 which appropriates funds to restore diagnostic, preventive, and restorative dental benefits to adult Medicaid enrollees.

Oral disease is a significant health problem for many Hawai'i residents, affecting their overall health and well-being. 223,438 adult Medicaid recipients have no diagnostic, preventive, or restorative dental coverage. In 2009, the State terminated all preventive and restorative dental care services for adult Medicaid recipients and reduced coverage to emergency-only care that is limited to pain relief, injuries, trauma, and tooth removal and extraction. The lack of preventive and restorative dentistry services for adult Medicaid beneficiaries increases potential health care complications for persons with co-existing chronic diseases, such as diabetes and heart disease. Poor oral health, combined with co-existing conditions like these, have been shown to lead to increased disability and death.

In Hawai'i, a disproportionate number of adult Medicaid enrollees ages twenty-one to forty-four use the emergency room for emergency dental services. Between 2016-2020, 29,536 adults aged 21 and older visited the ER with a dental-related diagnosis, and forty-nine percent (49%) of ER visits with a principal dental-related diagnosis were Medicaid recipients. On average during 2016-2020, Medicaid enrollees made two thousand seven hundred emergency room visits per year for acute oral health conditions, totaling \$21,700,000 in charges for outpatient emergency room services only. Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders were disproportionately represented in emergency room visits for dental-related diagnoses.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR

GLORIA CHANG
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
P.O. BOX 150
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0150

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND
MANAGEMENT DIVISION
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT (OFAM)

WRITTEN ONLY
TESTIMONY BY CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
ON
HOUSE BILL NO. 1754, H.D. 1

February 24, 2022
2:00 p.m.
Room 308 and Videoconference

RELATING TO ADULT DENTAL MEDICAID BENEFITS

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on this bill.

House Bill No. 1754, H.D. 1, appropriates an unspecified amount of general funds in FY 23 to the Department of Human Services to restore diagnostic, preventive, and restorative dental benefits to adult Medicaid enrollees.

B&F notes that the FY 23 Executive Supplemental Budget already includes \$3,466,328 in general funds and \$6,728,754 in federal funds in HMS 401's budget in FY 23 to restore certain adult dental benefits.

B&F also notes that, with respect to the general fund appropriation in this bill, the federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act requires that states receiving Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) II funds and Governor's Emergency Education Relief II funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and

- Higher education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

Further, the federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act requires that states receiving ARP ESSER funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and
- Higher education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

The U.S. Department of Education has issued rules governing how these maintenance of effort (MOE) requirements are to be administered. B&F will be working with the money committees of the Legislature to ensure that the State of Hawai'i complies with these ESSER MOE requirements.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.



Testimony in Support of HB 1754, HD1

February 22, 2022

Dear Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita and Respected Members of the Committee on Finance:

The Hawaii Dental Hygienists' Association (HDHA) strongly **SUPPORTS HB 1754, HD1**. The bill appropriates funds to the Department of Human Services to restore basic adult dental benefits to Medicaid and QUEST enrollees. We congratulate you on your initiative to expand Medicaid dental services for adults to include preventive, diagnostic and restorative treatment. This provision would directly benefit Hawaii's seniors, as well as adults with developmental and physical disabilities, allowing them to gain access to necessary oral health treatment.

HDHA cannot emphasize enough the importance of dental services that include preventive, restorative, prosthetic, and emergency services for all residents of Hawaii. As prevention specialists, dental hygienists are keenly aware of how oral health, or the lack thereof, can affect all aspects (physical, emotional, psychological, and social) of our lives. Time and again, research has shown that oral health has a direct correlation to over-all health. The mouth, is not a separate entity unto itself, it is connected to and shares a circulatory system with the rest of the body. Ignoring or limiting oral healthcare places Hawaii's adult Medicaid population at significant risk for increased health problems.

As the largest association representing Hawaii's licensed dental hygienists', HDHA strongly **SUPPORTS HB 1754, HD1** to address the unnecessary effects of dental disease among Hawaii's people, as well as the phenomenal expense of Medicaid enrollees seeking dental care in emergency room settings. Extending dental coverage to adults with chronic conditions like heart disease and diabetes has been proven to lead to significant cost savings in all areas of healthcare across the nation. The same quality of care and cost savings can be experienced here in Hawaii if adult dental benefits are restored to the Medicaid population.

Thank you for your consideration.

Testimony of
Jonathan Ching
Government Relations Director

Before:
House Committee on Finance
The Honorable Sylvia Luke, Chair
The Honorable Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair

February 24, 2022
2:00 p.m.
Via Videoconference

Re: HB 1754, HD1, Relating to Adult Dental Medicaid Benefits

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita, and committee members, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on HB 1754, HD1, which appropriates state general funds to restore diagnostic, preventive, and restorative dental benefits to adult Medicaid enrollees; provided that the department of human services obtains maximum federal matching funds available and pursues all funding sources, including private grants, prior to expending any general fund appropriations.

Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i SUPPORTS HB 1754, HD1.

Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i is Hawai'i's largest integrated health system that provides care and coverage for approximately 265,000 members. Each day, more than 4,400 dedicated employees and more than 650 Hawai'i Permanente Medical Group physicians and providers come to work at Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i to care for our members at our 20 medical facilities, including Moanalua Medical Center, providing high-quality care for our members and delivering on our commitment to improve the health of the 1.4 million people living in the communities we serve.

Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i supports policies that ensure all Hawaii residents have access to affordable, high-quality health care. Further, Kaiser Permanente supports "whole-person care," including the provision of access to services and resources that address beneficiaries' physical health, mental health and social needs. We know that adults with poor oral health, often because they lack dental coverage, often struggle to manage other chronic conditions. Furthermore, poor oral health and gum disease (periodontitis) has been associated with an increased risk of developing heart disease and bacterial infection in the blood stream.

To that end, we endorse the provision of coverage through Medicaid for a full range of needs, including dental services. Oral health is a crucial part of overall physical, psychological, social, and economic wellbeing.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen a dramatic increase in Medicaid members; however, comprehensive benefits for Medicaid enrollees was eliminated in 2009 and reduced coverage to emergency only (extraction and pain management).

Given that Medicaid beneficiaries comprise some of the most vulnerable, complex patients, the Medicaid program should play a role in addressing these needs. Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i supports HB 1754, HD1 because it is an investment to restore diagnostic, preventive and restorative dental benefits to adult Medicaid enrollees would be relatively small in comparison to the downstream cost savings to the entire healthcare system.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.



HAWAI'I ORAL HEALTH COALITION

Date: February 24, 2022

To: The Honorable Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
The Honorable Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair

Re: Strong Support for HB1754, Relating to Medicaid Benefits

Hrg: February 24, 2022 at 2:00 pm - Conference Room 308 & via Videoconference

The Hawai'i Oral Health Coalitionⁱ, covered by the Hawai'i Public Health Institute, is in **strong support of HB1754**, which makes an appropriation to restore certain adult dental benefits to Medicaid enrollees.

HB1754 appropriates funds to the DHS to restore basic diagnostic, preventive, and restorative dental coverage to adult Medicaid enrollees. In a 2021 survey conducted by Ward Research for HIPHIⁱⁱ, 9 in 10 registered Hawaii voters (92%) strongly agreed that preventative dental benefits should be included in adult Medicaid coverage. Additionally, 38 health and community organizations have expressed support for the reinstatement of this coverage.

Oral health is critical to overall physical, psychological, social, and economic wellbeing. Adults with poor oral health often struggle to manage chronic co-conditions such as diabetes. Researchers have linked poor oral health with cardiovascular disease, stroke and bacterial pneumonia. Pregnant women with poor oral health are at an increased risk of delivering preterm and/or low-birth-weight infants. Missing or broken teeth also create social barriers for adults to find and maintain gainful employment in our service-based economy.

Unfortunately, oral health in our state is a public health crisis, with Hawaii receiving a failing grade of "F" in three recent oral health report cards released by the Pew Center for the Statesⁱⁱⁱ. Drastic cuts in 2009 eliminated essential dental services for Medicaid enrollees and reduced coverage to emergency only (extraction and pain management).

As a consequence of these cuts, many in Hawai'i and across the nation have turned to emergency rooms for oral health care. The ADA reported in 2016 that ER visits nationwide continued to increase in 2012, costing the US health care system \$1.6 billion per year at an average cost of \$749 per visit^{iv}. In Hawai'i, recent data^v show that between 2016 and 2020 there was a total of 29,536 ER visits with a dental related diagnosis among adults aged 21 years and older, with an average of 10% of patients who visited ER for principal dental-related conditions having revisited the ER at least twice in the same year. Sixty-seven percent (19,691) of these visits had a principal dental diagnosis as the reason they visited the ER. In that same time period, Medicaid claims constituted 45% of the cumulative total charges for the ER visits with a principal dental-related diagnosis, about \$12.3 million. This does not include the total charges for secondary dental-related diagnoses. An estimated

79% of ER dental visits could be diverted to community settings, saving about 48% of the cost of each visit^{vi}.

HB1754 is a necessary health equity measure. The lack of coverage for diagnostic, preventative, and restorative dental services has had a disparate impact on Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander populations, and those on Neighbor Islands, who are at greater risk for poor oral health and limited access to oral health care. Hawai'i County and Kaua'i County saw the state's highest rates of ER visits with a dental-related diagnosis, and a large portion of Medicaid claims for ER visits with a principal diagnosis between 2016 and 2020 were submitted for Native Hawaiians/Part Native Hawaiian (about 31%, or 2,991) patients.

In 2020, the Health Policy Institute of the American Dental Association published a specific fiscal analysis for Legislative consideration about the costs versus cost-savings in reinstating preventive and restorative dental benefits for adults on Medicaid^{vii}. This analysis highlights three funding options for coverage ranging from basic to comprehensive. The federal government does match up to 50% of the state's investment in reinstating diagnostic, preventative and restorative dental coverage for all adult Medicaid recipients and, to date, 34 states do offer limited or comprehensive benefits for its adult Medicaid recipients^{viii}.

In order to adequately address the high needs of this population, due to the lack of access to preventive care since 2009, adults on Medicaid will require greater coverage than what is offered in Option 1 detailed in the ADA-HPI analysis. While covering exams, cleanings, and limited restorations is a step in the right direction, patients may continue to seek dental care from emergency departments across the state, or simply defer care due to continued lack of restorative coverage.

We strongly support the reinstatement of diagnostic, preventative, and restorative dental coverage for adults in Hawai'i enrolled in Medicaid and respectfully ask you to pass this important measure with careful consideration for what services will be most effective in addressing oral health among this population. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,



Patrick Donnelly
Statewide Oral Health Coalition Manager
Hawai'i Public Health Institute

ⁱ The Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition is community driven and led with fiscal sponsorship from the Hawaii Public Health Institute. Its members represent all Hawai'i islands and diverse sectors across the State. The mission of the Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition is to improve the overall health and wellbeing of all Hawai'i residents by increasing access and equity in oral health care through collaborative partnerships, advocacy, and education.

ⁱⁱ Findings from a Ward Research Study commissioned by the Hawai'i Public Health Institute that summarizes findings from a phone survey among n=810 Hawaii registered voters (+/-3.3 margin of error) conducted between October 26 to November 30, 2021. A copy of the results are available upon request.

ⁱⁱⁱ Hawai'i Oral Health: Key Findings, Hawai'i Department of Health. August 2015.

^{iv} Emergency department use for dental conditions continues to increase. Health Policy Institute Research Brief. American Dental Association. April 2015.

^v Lualima Data Alliance Hawai'i inpatient and Outpatient dental ER data (2016-2020). Accessed October 12, 2021.

^{vi, vii} Estimating the Cost of Introducing Comprehensive Medicaid Adult Dental Benefits in Hawai'i, Health Policy Institute Research Brief. American Dental Association. February 2020.

^{viii} Medicaid Adult Dental Benefits Coverage by State, Center for Health Care Strategies, Inc., September 2019.

HB-1754-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2022 4:11:18 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Doris Segal Matsunaga	Save Medicaid Hawaii	Support	Yes

Comments:

Save Medicaid Hawaii strongly supports this bill and urges funding at the Option 2 level

HB-1754-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2022 5:26:05 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Louis Erteschik	Hawaii Disability Rights Center	Support	No

Comments:

We are in strong support.



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1754 HD1

TO: Chair Luke, Vice-Chair Yamashita, & Members – House Committee on Finance
FROM: Trisha Kajimura
Deputy Director - Community
DATE: February 24, 2022 at 2:00 PM

Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHRC) **supports** HB 1754 HD1, which appropriates funds to restore diagnostic, preventive, and restorative dental benefits to adult Medicaid enrollees for FY 2022-2023, requiring DHS to obtain the maximum federal matching funds available and pursue all funding sources, including private grants, prior to expanding any general fund appropriations.

HHRC's mission is to reduce harm, promote health, create wellness, and fight stigma in Hawai'i and the Pacific. We work with many individuals who are impacted by poverty, housing instability, and other social determinants of health. Many of our program participants are adult Medicaid enrollees, some of whom are living with HIV. As the new chapter of the Life Foundation, HHRC has provided case management and other services to individuals living with HIV since the Life Foundation first opened in 1983.

The elimination of diagnostic, preventive and restorative dental services for adults on Medicaid in 2009 caused a major gap in health care for our clients that we have been fighting an uphill battle to help them with ever since. Dental care is a major part of health care that everyone needs access to. The consequences of inadequate dental care for the medically vulnerable can be very harmful. Our Medicaid enrolled clients frequently request financial assistance for dental care and it has been impossible for us to pay for all of the services they need. Inadequate dental care leads to preventable pain, suffering, stigma and illness. Our Medicaid enrolled clients are faced with extraction as the only option to treat a toothache. Then they have no treatment options for their missing tooth, which in addition to the health problem, causes social and employment discrimination. This gap in health care has been devastating and it needs to be addressed.

Please prioritize this restoration of essential health services in Hawai'i. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



Date: February 24, 2022

To: The Honorable Sylvia Luke, Chair
The Honorable Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice-Chair
House Committee on Finance

From: Peggy Mierzwa, Community and Government Relations

RE: **HB1754 HD1** Relating to Medicaid Benefits-Strong Support

AlohaCare appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT of HB1754 HD1**. This measure would appropriate funding to Department of Human Services to restore adult dental benefits to Medicaid members.

Founded in 1994, AlohaCare is a community-rooted, non-profit health plan serving over 80,000 Medicaid and dual-eligible health plan members on all islands. It is the only state health plan exclusively serving Medicaid patients. Our mission is to serve individuals and communities in the true spirit of aloha by ensuring and advocating access to quality health care for all. We believe that health is about supporting whole-person care, including access to housing and food security, to build a stronger, healthier Hawai'i.

For over a decade, Hawai'i's Medicaid program has covered only emergency dental services for adult beneficiaries. Preventative and restorative dental services, as cleanings and x-rays, are not covered for adults. As a result, individuals resort to the emergency room in order to get treatment for complicated infections and excruciating pain. Many times the individual has little options beyond tooth extractions in order to address problem areas. Many of these catastrophic events could have been avoided had preventative care been available.

Oral care has a significant impact on a person's overall health. Individuals with chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease lead to increased disability and death. A lack of preventive services commonly leads to gum disease, which is associated with an increased risk of heart disease. Poor dental health increases the risk of a bacterial infection in the blood stream, which can affect the heart valves; tooth loss patterns are connected to coronary artery disease; strong connection between diabetes and cardiovascular disease and evidence that people with diabetes benefit from periodontal treatment.¹ Pregnant women are at much greater risks to periodontal disease. Periodontitis has been associated with poor pregnancy outcomes, including preterm birth and low birth weight.² Women with poor dental health are more than 3 times more likely to have a child with cavities.³

¹ <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/expert-answers/heart-disease-prevention/faq-20057986>

² <https://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/publications/features/pregnancy-and-oral-health.html>

³ <https://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/publications/features/pregnancy-and-oral-health.html>



Providing dental coverage to adults with Medicaid, prevents avoidable health conditions and uplifts the overall health of communities, where people are able to care for their families, stay out of emergency rooms, and live fulfilling lives. This benefit will positively impact the well-being our communities.

We are grateful for your consideration of this important measure.



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facebook.com/AARPHawaii

The State Legislature
The House Committee on Finance
Thursday, February 24, 2022
2:00 p.m.

TO: The Honorable Sylvia Luke, Chair

RE: Support for H.B. 1754 H.D. 1 Relating to Adult Dental Medicaid Benefits

Aloha Chair Luke and Members of the Committee:

My name is Keali'i Lopez and I am the State Director for AARP Hawai'i. AARP is a membership organization of people age fifty and over, with over 140,000 members in Hawai'i.

AARP strongly supports H.B. 1754 H.D. 1 which appropriates funds to restore diagnostic, preventive, and restorative dental benefits to adult Medicaid enrollees.

- According to an issue paper on improving dental coverage for older adults, (Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, July 2021), nearly one half of the Medicare population (47%) or 24 million beneficiaries 65 years and older, do not have dental coverage.
- Almost half of all Medicare beneficiaries did not have a dental visit within the past year (47%), with higher rates among those who have low incomes (73%), or who are in fair or poor health (63%), as of 2018.
- Average out-of-pocket spending on dental services among Medicare beneficiaries who had any dental service was \$874 in 2018. One in five Medicare beneficiaries (20%) who used dental services spent more than \$1,000 out-of-pocket on dental care.

Cost concerns and lack of dental coverage contribute to many older adults foregoing routine and other dental procedures. Inadequate dental care can exacerbate chronic medical conditions such as diabetes and heart conditions, and lead to preventable complications that sometimes result in costly emergency room visits. Adults who are disabled, homebound, or institutionalized have an even greater risk of dental diseases. Many of them would be Medicaid recipients. Broadening the dental benefit to the adult Medicaid enrollee will greatly improve their overall health and reduce the risk of costly medical care and emergency room visits.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to **support H.B. 1754 H.D. 1**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keali'i S. Lopez". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Keali'i S. López
State Director



February 22, 2022

The Honorable Sylvia Luke, Chair
The Honorable Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance

Re: HB 1754 HD1 – Relating to Adult Dental Medicaid Benefits

Dear Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita, and Committee Members:

Hawaii Medical Service Association (HMSA) appreciates the opportunity to testify on HB 1754, HD1, which appropriates funds to restore diagnostic, preventive, and restorative dental benefits to adult medicaid enrollees; provided that the department of human services obtains maximum federal matching funds available and pursues all funding sources, including private grants, prior to expending any general fund appropriations. Effective 7/1/2060.

HMSA supports access to dental coverage and oral health care for our members. We believe that preventive and restorative dentistry services are important as it can decrease potential health care complications for individuals living with chronic diseases, such as heart disease and diabetes.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 1754 HD1.

Sincerely,

Matthew W. Sasaki
Assistant Vice President
Government & External Relations



February 22, 2022

To: Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
Representative Kyle T. Tamashita, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance

Re: Testimony in Strong Support of HB 1754 HD1

Hrg: February 24, 2022 at 2:00 PM

Dear Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita, and Members of the Committees,

The Hawai'i Public Health Association (HPHA) is a group of over 450 community members, public health professionals, and organizations statewide dedicated to improving public health. Our mission is to promote public health in Hawai'i through leadership, collaboration, education and advocacy. Additionally, HPHA aims to call attention to issues around social justice and equity in areas that extend beyond the traditional context of health (e.g., education, digital equity, cultural sensitivity), which can have profound impacts on health equity and well-being. Therefore, as stewards of public health, HPHA is also advocating for equity in all policies.

Thank you for the opportunity to **testify in support** of HB 1754 HD1 which appropriates funds to restore diagnostic, preventive, and restorative dental benefits to adult Medicaid enrollees for FY 2022-2023, requiring DHS to obtain the maximum federal matching funds available and pursue all funding sources, including private grants, prior to expanding any general fund appropriations.

Adult medicaid enrollees have not been able to receive basic dental care since 2009, causing avoidable illness, increased emergency room utilization and exacerbating health disparities in Hawai'i. In our state, more than one in three low-income adults indicate that the condition of their mouth and teeth affects their ability to interview for a job. Furthermore, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander populations and those on Neighbor Islands are at greater risk for poor oral health and limited access to oral health care.

Please support reinstating adult dental medicaid benefits. Oral health is essential to overall health. Reinstating these benefits is a cost-effective, person-centered approach to making our communities healthier.

We support HB1754 HD1 and respectfully ask that you pass this measure. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important public health issue affecting members of our community.

Sincerely,

J. Leocadia Conlon, PhD, MPH, PA-C
Legislative Committee Chair
Hawai'i Public Health Association



**Testimony to the House Committee on Finance
Thursday, February 24, 2022; 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 308
Via Videoconference**

RE: HOUSE BILL NO. 1754, HOUSE DRAFT 1, RELATING TO MEDICAID BENEFITS.

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Primary Care Association (HPCA) is a 501(c)(3) organization established to advocate for, expand access to, and sustain high quality care through the statewide network of Community Health Centers throughout the State of Hawaii. The HPCA **SUPPORTS** the reinstatement of dental benefits to adult Medicaid enrollees at federally qualified health centers (FQHCs).

By way of background, the HPCA represents Hawaii's Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). FQHCs provide desperately needed medical services at the frontlines to over 150,000 patients each year who live in rural and underserved communities. Long considered champions for creating a more sustainable, integrated, and wellness-oriented system of health, FQHCs provide a more efficient, more effective and more comprehensive system of healthcare.

The bill, as received by your Committee, would appropriate an unspecified amounts of general funds for fiscal year 2022-2023, respectively, to restore diagnostic, preventative, and restorative dental benefits to adult Medicaid enrollees. The bill further requires the Department of Human Services (DHS) to obtain the maximum federal matching funds available for this expenditure, and to pursue all funding sources known to this State, including private grants, prior to expending any general funds appropriated.

Since 2008, the HPCA has consistently urged the reinstatement of this essential benefit. At that time, the Legislature faced enormous fiscal challenges that forced your predecessors to make many difficult decisions. The elimination of adult dental Medicaid benefits was just one of many painful cuts that needed to be made for the good of all. As the economy rebounded, most of the programs cut were reorganized and many were reinstated to ensure that the needs of our citizens are met. Yet, adult dental Medicaid was never returned..

To ensure seamless transition should the Legislature agree to provide the state's portion for the reinstatement of the benefit, the benefit should appropriately be integrated into the State Medicaid Plan. The State would also need to show a continual funding source for this additional benefit.

Testimony on House Bill No. 1754, House Draft 1
Thursday, February 24, 2022; 2:00 p.m.
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We note that the approval of a "stand alone" bill such as this vehicle would only provide a one-time appropriation for this purpose.

To ensure that the benefit would be eligible for federal match, it would need to be incorporated into the State budget. We note that according to the Budget-in-Brief submitted by the Governor in his Supplemental Budget request, that document contains a provision that indicates that funds for this expanded benefit is indeed contained in the proposed budget bill under Line Item HMS-401. Specifically, the Administration requests \$3,466,328 in general funds and \$6,728,754 in federal funds to "restore and expand. . . adult dental benefits". (See, 2023 Budget in Brief, pp. 744-745.).

We further note that as part of the Administration's Executive Budget request to the 2017 Hawaii State Legislature, DHS requested \$4,704,480 in general funds and \$7,056,720 in federal funds for fiscal year 2018, and \$9,408,960 in general funds and \$14,113,440 in federal funds for fiscal year 2019 for "the restoration of the adult dental benefits. (See, 2018 Budget in Brief, pages 1056-1059.).

In the purpose clause of the original version of this bill, three options were offered to address the need for dental benefits for Medicaid recipients:

- OPTION 1. Basic package of diagnostic, preventative, and restorative services;
- OPTION 2. Basic package plus core prosthodontic services; and
- OPTION 3. A further expansion to a more robust set of prosthodontic services.

These packages of benefits, and the costs associated, were published by the American Dental Association's Health Policy Institute, in a report dated February 2020. (See, https://www.ada.org/-/media/project/ada-organization/ada/ada-org/files/resources/research/hpi/hpibrief_0220_1.pdf)

The HPCA asserts that the prolonged damage caused to the oral health of adult dental Medicaid recipients from fourteen (14) years of neglect and apathy by the State will necessitate significant resources to remediate this population. After all, what good are x-rays and cleanings if you don't provide the necessary resources to adequately treat these patients?

The HPCA further proclaims that the State has a moral obligation to provide the most robust package of benefits possible for this underprivileged and underserved population. At the very minimum, until such time as the oral health conditions of Hawaii's adult Medicaid population is stabilized, the benefit package should be at the OPTION 3 level.

Testimony on House Bill No. 1754, House Draft 1
Thursday, February 24, 2022; 2:00 p.m.
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In sum, the HPCA asks this Committee approve an increase to Line Item HMS-401 in House Bill No. 1600, and that the amount of the increase be equal to the OPTION 3 level of benefits recommended in the American Dental Association's report dated February 2020.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Public Affairs and Policy Director Erik K. Abe at 536-8442, or eabe@hawaiiipca.net.



Hawai'i
Children's Action Network Speaks!
Building a unified voice for Hawai'i's children

To: Representative Luke, Chair
Representative Yamashita, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance

Re: **HB 1754 HD1- Relating to adult dental Medicaid benefits**
2:00 PM, February 24, 2022

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita, and committee members,

On behalf of HCAN Speaks!, thank you for the opportunity to **testify in strong support of House bill 1754 HD1, relating to adult dental Medicaid benefits**

This is the year to restore diagnostic, preventive, and restorative dental benefits for adults on Medicaid. Oral Health is essential to overall health. But since 2009, we have treated oral health like a luxury instead of a need. It is costly to both individuals and the state. Extending dental coverage to patients with chronic health conditions like diabetes and heart disease can lead to cost savings in related areas of health care spending. It's estimated additional medical care cost savings range from \$1.9 million to \$5.3 million.

This is a multi-generation issue. Hawai'i's children have some of the worst oral health outcomes in the country. Our third graders have the highest prevalence of tooth decay and 7 out of 10 third graders are impacted by tooth decay. Oral health habits are a family issue and if parents have access to dental prevention services, the whole family will benefit. Our most vulnerable families had this benefit previously and we believe it should be restored.

Oral health is health and reinstating these benefits is a cost-effective, person-centered approach to making our communities healthier. **For these reasons, HCAN Speaks! respectfully requests the Committee to support this measure.**

Thank you,

Kathleen Algire
Director of Early Learning and Health Policy





Hawaii Dental Association

To: House Committee on Finance
Time/Date: 2:00 p.m. February 24, 2022
Location: Via Videoconference
Re: HB 1754, HD1, Relating to Adult Dental Medicaid Benefits

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice-Chair Yamashita, and members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Dental Association (HDA) is in **support of HB 1754, HD1**, relating to adult dental Medicaid benefits. This bill appropriates funds to restore diagnostic, preventive, and restorative dental benefits to adult Medicaid enrollees, provided the Department of Human Services obtains maximum federal matching funds available and pursues all funding sources, including private grants, prior to expending any general fund appropriations.

Oral health is essential for overall health and wellness. Oral health is linked with systemic health conditions and diseases as well as employment opportunities, economic stability, and social connectedness. One cannot be healthy without a healthy mouth. Yet thousands of low income adults in Hawai'i cannot afford the oral health care they need to stay healthy, work, socialize, and live pain free. Part of this disparity is driven by gaps in dental coverage in federal and state policy, particularly dental coverage for adults enrolled in Medicaid. For adults who rely on Medicaid, being able to afford oral health care could be the key to recovering their health or getting a new job. Notably, the people most likely to get sick and lose jobs during the pandemic are also the people who face the biggest barriers to oral health and are among those who would most benefit from improved oral health coverage in Medicaid.¹ For these reasons, we strongly support this measure.

HDA is a statewide membership organization representing dentists practicing in Hawaii and licensed by the State of Hawaii's Board of Dentistry. HDA members are committed to protecting the oral health and well-being of the people of Hawaii, from keiki to kupuna and everyone in between.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 1754, HD1.

¹ Vujcic M, Fosse C, Reusch C, Burroughs M. Making the case for adults in all state Medicaid programs. Health Policy Institute White Paper. American Dental Association in partnership with Community Catalyst and Families USA. July 2021



KŌKUA KALIHI VALLEY COMPREHENSIVE FAMILY SERVICES

2239 N. SCHOOL STREET ♦ HONOLULU, HAWAII 96819 ♦ TEL: 808-791-9400 ♦ FAX: 808-848-0979 ♦ www.kkv.net

To: House Committee on Finance

Hearing Date/Time: Thursday, February 24, 2022, 2:00 PM

Re: HB 1754, RELATING TO ADULT DENTAL MEDICAID BENEFITS.

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and committee members,

Thank you for the opportunity to *testify in support* on HB 1754 relating to adult dental Medicaid benefits. I strongly support this bill and urge funding at the Option 2 level.

In 2009, Hawaii eliminated diagnostic, preventive and restorative dental services for adults on Medicaid. Hawaii is currently one of only 13 states that provide emergency care only. Since 2009, we have seen increased emergency department (ED) utilization, particularly by Medicaid recipients, and increased costs related to otherwise preventable conditions.

The Hawaii Med-QUEST Division and the State Legislature received the Hawaii-specific fiscal analysis from the Health Policy Institute of the American Dental Association in February 2020 that projected both costs and cost benefits to restore Hawaii adult dental benefits. Three options for reinstating dental benefits were provided at that time.

It is recommended that the House advocate for Option 2, which would enable Medicaid recipients to get a range of diagnostic, preventive and restorative services, as well as basic prosthodontic and periodontal services, as needed. The difference in State funding would be \$8,823,781 in state funds for option 2, versus \$3,466,328 in State funds for option 1. Federal funding would provide the remainder of the costs under the Federal Medicaid Assistance Percentage (FMAP). Limited coverage under option 1 would be capped per recipient and may only cover an annual exam, fluoride treatment, bi-annual cleanings, one set of bite wing X-rays per year and one non-emergency tooth extraction or filling per year. As you can imagine, dental care for someone who has been without any for a while (12 years since benefits were reduced!) is likely to exceed this limited benefit. It seems that reinstating coverage to the second option makes more sense, given the high costs paid for poor oral health exacerbated co-conditions and visits to the ER for acute dental care.

What is important to note that this fiscal analysis also projects that over time, additional medical care cost savings are expected due to health status improvements in cooccurring health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, pregnancy, and fewer ER visits for services

Thank you for you time to testify in support of this bill,

David Derauf, MD, MPH

Executive Director

Kokua Kalihi Valley Comprehensive Family Services

Providing Medical & Dental Services, Health Education, Family Planning, Perinatal, WIC and Social Services to
Kalihi Valley residents since 1972. Neighbors being neighborly to neighbors.

Providing Medical & Dental Services, Health Education, Family Planning, Perinatal, WIC and Social Services to
Kalihi Valley residents since 1972. Neighbors being neighborly to neighbors.



949 Kamokila Boulevard, 3rd Floor, Suite 350, Kapolei, HI 96707
808.675.7300 | www.ohanahealthplan.com

February 24, 2022
2:00 p.m.

Via Videoconference Conference Room 308

To: The Honorable Chair Sylvia Luke
The Honorable Vice Chair Kyle T. Yamashita
House Committee on Finance

From: 'Ohana Health Plan
Rachel Wilkinson, Government Relations Manager

Re: HB1754 HD1, Relating to Adult Dental Medicaid Benefits; **In Support**

'Ohana Health Plan offers our **support** of HB1754 HD1, which appropriates funds to restore diagnostic, preventive, and restorative dental benefits to adult Medicaid enrollees; provided that the department of human services obtains maximum federal matching funds available and pursues all funding sources, including private grants, prior to expending any general fund appropriations.

'Ohana Health Plan is a wholly owned subsidiary of Centene Corporation, a leading multi-national healthcare enterprise committed to helping people live healthier lives. Since 2008, 'Ohana Health Plan has provided government-sponsored managed care services to families—from keiki to kupuna—and individuals with complex medical needs primarily through QUEST Integration (Medicaid), Medicare Advantage and Medicare Prescription Drug Plans across the state.

Poor oral health is one of the most important issues facing our state, particularly with the Medicaid population. In 2009, drastic budget cuts were made and essential dental services for Medicaid enrollees were reduced to emergency-only extractions and pain management. To date, Hawaii is one of only 13 states that provide emergency dental care only. And while oral health can often be overlooked, there is a clear correlation between oral health and overall health.

According to the Hawaii Department of Health's 2012 *Hawaii Oral Health: Key Findings* report, there were more than 3,000 emergency room visits in Hawaii for preventable dental problems, resulting in \$8.5 million in hospital charges. Studies have shown links between gum disease and higher risks of heart attack, stroke, diabetes, and

rheumatoid arthritis. Oral health diseases have also been shown to cause low-birth rates and pre-term births for pregnant women.

The state's investment to restore diagnostic, preventive, and restorative dental benefits to adult Medicaid enrollees would be relatively small in comparison to the downstream cost savings to the entire healthcare system.

We strongly urge the passage of HB1754 HD1. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this measure.



Papa Ola Lokahi
Nana I Ka Pono Na Ma

Papa Ola Lōkahi

894 Queen Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Phone: 808.597.6550 ~ Facsimile: 808.597.6551

House Committee on Finance
Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
Representative Kyle Yamashita, Vice Chair

Thursday, February 24, 2022, 2:00PM, Videoconference

RE: HB 1754 HD 1 – Relating to Medicaid Benefits
Position: STRONG SUPPORT

Dear Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita, and Members of the Committee on Finance,

Papa Ola Lōkahi **supports** HB 1754 HD 1, which would provide funds to increase access to oral health care by restoring diagnostic, preventive, and restorative dental benefits to adult Medicaid enrollees. The 2009 elimination of dental services from Medicaid appears to be linked to serious impacts, including increased emergency department utilization and more costly oral health concerns. Data from 2006 and 2012 in Hawai‘i shows that Medicaid emergency department visits increased by 67%, which translated into hospital charges increasing from about \$4 million to over \$8.5 million.¹

Papa Ola Lōkahi supports efforts to provide protective and preventive measures through person-centered policies that guard and sustain the health of our communities. This bill calls for funding that has a clear impact for the Medicaid population; oral disease risk is higher for those who suffer from chronic conditions such as heart disease, emphysema, diabetes, hepatitis C, and obesity.² Native Hawaiians experience shorter life expectancies and higher mortality rates due to these chronic conditions and are also overrepresented in the Medicaid population, so the provision of dental services impacts Native Hawaiian health disproportionately.

Native Hawaiians hold a holistic view of health, in which the health of the people, land, and spiritual realms are interconnected. This perspective lends to envisioning health care policies, programs, and delivery that provide resources for all aspects of health and ensure equitable access to services. HB 1754 HD 1, as a step to those larger goals, works to provide a critical set of services to those most in need.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **strong support** of this important legislation.

About Papa Ola Lōkahi

Papa Ola Lōkahi, the Native Hawaiian Health Board authorized by the federal Native Hawaiian Health Care Improvement Act, is charged with raising the health status of Native Hawaiians to the highest possible level, which we achieve through strategic partnerships, programs, and public policy.

Papa Ola Lokahi

is the Native Hawaiian Health Board established in 1988 to improve the health and well-being of Native Hawaiians.

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Hawai‘i State Department of Health

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Executive Director

Sheri-Ann Daniels, EdD

¹ Hawai‘i Oral Health: Key Findings. (2015). Family Health Services Division. Hawai‘i State Department of Health. https://health.hawaii.gov/about/files/2013/06/Key_Findings_wC.pdf

² Griffin S, Barker L, Griffin P, Cleveland J, Kohn W. Oral health needs among adults in the United States with chronic diseases. *J Am Dent Assoc.* 2009;140(10):1266-1274.



February 22, 2022

House Committee on Finance

Strong SUPPORT of HB1754 Relating to Adult Dental Medicaid Benefits

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice-Chair Yamashita, and Members of the House Committee on Finance:

I am testifying to advocate for the adult Medicaid population across the State of Hawaii. In my capacity as a Medicaid dental provider and Director of a community health center dental program, I've witnessed a direct correlation between oral disease and serious adverse health outcomes over the last decade since adult dental benefits were cut.

Please SUPPORT the comprehensive restoration of Adult Dental Medicaid Benefits.

This is an opportunity for the State to provide a solution to a decade of untreated oral disease in Hawaii. There is a substantial difference between a minimal show of support and more comprehensive restoration of these benefits. A comprehensive restoration of benefits would be Option 3 as indicated in the previous bill version. It is also important to note that the cost estimates from the ADA HPI study were based on 120,000 adults enrolled in Medicaid. The 2022 enrollment exceeds 200,000 adults.

Please consider these points and **SUPPORT the comprehensive restoration** of Adult Dental Medicaid Benefits.

- Oral health is a vital part of overall health.
- Comprehensive dental coverage is part of any responsible health plan.
- Comprehensive dental care can help eliminate the loss of teeth and infections.
- Comprehensive dental care reduces the impact of chronic disease.
- If adults do not have the resources to go to the dentist they will wait until there are symptoms (pain, bleeding, swelling); conditions become impossible to reverse and costly to treat.
- Medicaid adults have been driven to the hospital emergency rooms for dental problems.
- Families share health care attitudes. Dental neglect of parents impact their keiki.

Mahalo,

Anthony S. Kim, DMD

Dental Director

Waimanalo Health Center



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1754 HD1: RELATING TO ADULT DENTAL
MEDICAID BENEFITS**

TO: Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair, Representative Kyle Yamashita, Vice
Chair; and Members, Committee on Finance

FROM: Rob Van Tassell, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawaii

Hearing: Thursday, 2/24/22; 2:00 PM; via videoconference

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita, and Members, Committee on Finance:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony **in strong support** of HB 1754 HD1, which would restore diagnostic, preventive, and restorative dental benefits to adult Medicaid enrollees. I am Rob Van Tassell, with Catholic Charities Hawaii.

Catholic Charities Hawaii (CCH) is a tax exempt, non-profit agency that has been providing social services in Hawaii for over 70 years. CCH has programs serving elders, children, families, homeless, and immigrants. Our mission is to provide services and advocacy for the most vulnerable in Hawaii. Catholic Charities Hawaii has a long history of working in the areas of affordable housing and homelessness.

CCH strongly supports restoring these dental benefits to adults on Medicaid. Dental coverage and oral health care are needed not only for people to work and enjoy life, but are important to reduce health care costs in the future. Many Medicaid beneficiaries may have chronic conditions which could be impacted without adequate dental care. Hawaii families are living on tight budgets, especially the elderly, and so will put off dental care until there may be an emergency or other serious health impacts. Since eliminating these benefits for adults in 2009, Hawaii has seen an increase in emergency room utilization and an increase in costs for preventable conditions.

We also are concerned about healthcare equity. Without these benefits, our Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders and neighbor island residents are at greater risk for poorer oral health and have limited access to oral health care.

Medicaid serves Hawaii's most vulnerable populations. It is time to restore these dental benefits. Catholic Charities Hawaii urges your strong support for HB 1754 HD1.

Please contact our Legislative Liaison, Betty Lou Larson at alohabettylou@hotmail.com or (808) 373-0356 if you have any questions.





THE QUEEN'S HEALTH SYSTEMS

To: The Honorable Sylvia Luke, Chair
The Honorable Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair
Members, House Committee on Finance

From: Jacce Mikulanec, Director, Government Relations, The Queen's Health Systems

Date: February 24, 2022

Re: In support of HB 1754 HD1: Relating to Adult Dental Medicaid Benefits.

The Queen's Health Systems (Queen's) is a nonprofit corporation that provides expanded health care capabilities to the people of Hawai'i and the Pacific Basin. Since the founding of the first Queen's hospital in 1859 by Queen Emma and King Kamehameha IV, it has been our mission to provide quality health care services in perpetuity for Native Hawaiians and all of the people of Hawai'i. Over the years, the organization has grown to four hospitals, and more than 1,500 affiliated physicians and providers statewide. As the preeminent health care system in Hawai'i, Queen's strives to provide superior patient care that is constantly advancing through education and research.

Queen's appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 1754 HD1, which would allow for the appropriation of funds to restore dental benefits to adult Medicaid enrollees provided that the Department of Human Services obtain the maximum allowed federal matching and other public and, or, private sources of funding prior to expending any general fund appropriations. Restoration of these funds to provide comprehensive oral health coverage to adults in Medicaid helps avert unnecessary health care costs associated with emergency visits, reduces our State's overall dental spending, and has been shown to help the overall employment and economic security of enrollees.

Annually our Punchbowl facility cares for over 5000 patients who need dental procedures; of those served, roughly half are Medicaid enrollees or uninsured. Our services include preventative oral care, treatment of dental diseases, and higher acuity dentistry (dental procedures that can only be done in a hospital based clinic setting).

Thank you for allowing The Queen's Health Systems to testify in support of HB 1754 HD1.

The mission of The Queen's Health Systems is to fulfill the intent of Queen Emma and King Kamehameha IV to provide in perpetuity quality health care services to improve the well-being of Native Hawaiians and all of the people of Hawai'i.



February 22, 2022

The Honorable Sylvia Luke, Chair
The Honorable Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance

House Bill 1754 HD1 – Relating to Medicaid Benefits

Dear Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Association of Health Plans (HAHP) appreciates the opportunity to testify on HB 1754 HD1. HAHP is a statewide partnership that unifies Hawaii’s health plans to improve the health of Hawaii’s communities together. A majority of Hawaii residents receive their health coverage through a plan associated with one of our organizations.

HAHP believes that preventive and restorative dental care improves health care outcomes, especially for those living with chronic disease such as diabetes and heart disease. HAHP supports the legislature’s intent to restore funding for adult dental care benefits for the Medicaid population.

Thank you for allowing us to testify expressing our **support** for HB 1754 HD1.

Sincerely,

HAHP Public Policy Committee

cc: HAHP Board Members

Testimony of Waikiki Health to:
The House Committee on Finance
The Honorable Sylvia Luke, Chair
The Honorable Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair

In Support of HB1754 HD1 RELATING TO ADULT DENTAL MEDICAID BENEFITS
Agenda #3 Thursday, February 24, 2022, at 2:00PM

Chair, Vice Chair, and committee members, I am Phyllis Dendle, CEO of Waikiki Health, a federally qualified community health center. We have been serving the people of Honolulu for over 50 years. Well over half our patients have Medicaid benefits and we provide dental service to many of these people.

I request that you amend HB 1754 HD1 to insert the amount appropriated to \$36,200,000. This is the amount proposed by the American Dental Association in their study of potential Medicaid adult dental benefits in Hawaii published in February 2020. At this level Medicaid patients will have access to preventative and restorative dentistry such as fillings and crowns that allow them to keep their teeth. Additionally, at this level patients will be able to be fitted for dentures. Dentures are a desperate need for patients because so many have had their teeth removed when they became painful. That's what Medicaid covers today, extractions for painful teeth.

In 2006 the legislature appropriated funds to provide comprehensive dental coverage for adults covered by Medicaid. It covered annual exams, X-rays, and cleaning. It also covered fillings, crowns, extractions, and dentures. These benefits continued until August 10, 2009. At that time the benefits for adults went back to being emergency extractions. The legislators who came before you believed in the need for comprehensive dental benefits and I'm sure you can understand why.

Having adequate dental care is essential to the health of every person. At minimum it allows them to eat healthy food. It also helps limit the infections caused by decaying teeth and poor mouth care that is a risk to their life. It is critical for people to be employed and employment is the first step to lifting people out of poverty. Job seekers with missing teeth are unattractive and are not hired in favor of people who have teeth that allow them to smile.

Friends, I am asking you, as respectfully and sincerely as I can, to fund full dental benefits to adults covered by Medicaid. Please place this funding in the budget if you do not wish to pass this legislation. The need is desperate. Making this appropriation will change the lives of citizens who count on you to assist them. Thank you for your consideration.



TO: Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita and Members of the House Committee on Finance

FROM: Ryan Kusumoto, President & CEO of Parents And Children Together (PACT)

DATE/LOCATION: February 25, 2022; 2:00 p.m., Conference Room 308/Videoconference

RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1754 HD 1– RELATING TO ADULT DENTAL MEDICAID BENEFITS

We ask you to support HB 1754 which appropriates funds to restore diagnostic, preventive, and restorative dental benefits to adult medicaid enrollees; provided that the department of human services obtains maximum federal matching funds available and pursues all funding sources, including private grants, prior to expending any general fund appropriations.

As one of Hawaii’s social service providers, serving over 17,000 clients annually, we have a vested interest in helping Hawaii’s resident to thrive. Thriving individuals and communities are healthy individuals and communities. For many of our clients, having access to preventative and restorative dental benefits would greatly benefit them – physically, mentally, emotionally and socially. Oral health affects overall health and reinstating these benefits is a cost-effective, person-centered approach to making our communities healthier.

Founded in 1968, Parents And Children Together (PACT) is one of Hawaii’s not-for-profit organizations providing a wide array of innovative and educational social services to under-resourced families. Assisting more than 17,000 people across the state annually, PACT helps families identify, address and successfully resolve challenges through its 20 programs. Among its services are: early education programs, domestic violence prevention and intervention programs, child abuse prevention and intervention programs, childhood sexual abuse supportive group services, child and adolescent behavioral health programs, sex trafficking intervention, poverty prevention and community strengthening programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support of HB 1754 HD 1**, please contact me at (808) 847-3285 or rkusumoto@pacthawaii.org if you have any questions.

HB-1754-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2022 11:30:59 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Joseph Kohn MD	We Are One, Inc. - www.WeAreOne.cc - WAO	Support	No

Comments:

Strongly Support HB1754 HD1

www.WeAreOne.cc

Testimony on House Bill 1754
Relating to Medicaid Benefits

Submitted by Dr. Steven Pine, DDS., Dental Director, West Hawaii Community Health Center

February 23, 2022

I, Dr. Steven Pine, DDS, currently work as the Dental Director at West Hawaii Community Health Center, (WHCHC) and I strongly support Senate Bill 1294 which appropriates funds for the restoration of adult dental benefits to Medicaid patients.

At WHCHC we believe that oral health indicates much more than simply healthy teeth, as the mouth can be both a cause and a window to individual and population health and well-being. Oral health is critical to general health and well-being as the mouth is the gateway to the rest of the body, providing clues about overall health. It is sometimes the first place where signs and symptoms of other diseases are noticed. Causes of poor oral health are complex and access to dental care for adults is crucial for overall health and well-being. However, adults in West Hawaii are less likely to see a dentist than adults on average for the state. 35.6% of West Hawaii adults have had no dental care compared to the state rate of 29%. In addition, higher rates of ER visits with a dental-related diagnosis were found for both Hawaii County and Kauai County in 21–44-year-old patients.

Between 2016 and 2020, Medicaid recipients averaged 2,700 emergency room visits per year for acute oral health conditions, totaling \$21,700,000 in charges for outpatient emergency room services alone. Neighbor island ERS on Hawaii island and Kauai have higher rates of ER use for acute dental conditions.

Limited coverage under option 1 would be capped per recipient and may only cover an annual exam, fluoride treatment, bi-annual cleanings, one set of bite wings radiographs per year and one non-emergency tooth extraction or filling per year. As a provider who actually treats patients, the dental needs of these patients far exceed this basic requirement.

The difference in State funding would be \$8,823,781 in state funds for option 2, versus \$3,466,328 in state funds for option 1. Federal funding from would provide the remainder of the costs of the benefits under the Federal Medicaid Assistance Percentage (FMAP).

Fiscal analysis also projects that over time, additional medical care cost savings estimates range from \$1.9 million per year to \$5.3 million due to health status improvements in cost-occurring acute and chronic diseases.

Research shows that adults who receive Medicaid frequently go without comprehensive oral treatment due to high treatment costs which must be paid for out-of-pocket (Hawaii Oral Health: Key Findings, 2015). A recent CDC report shows that the cost of treatment or lack of insurance was the main reason 42% of adults, 18-64 years of age, went without a dental visit for an oral health problem in the past 6 months

Consistent with national statistics that demonstrate disparity in dental care for the low-income vs high income adults, a recent survey on Hawaii Oral Health noted there are substantial dental health disparities in Hawaii. Adults with low income are more likely to have dental problems and less likely to see a dentist each year.

WHCHC provides care to the most under-served people in our community who have the most complicated health needs. Individuals with a range of chronic conditions are more susceptible to oral disease. Oral disease can also exacerbate chronic disease symptoms.

By passing this bill you will improve oral health outcomes for the most disadvantaged adults in our community. Providing adult dental services for those living in poverty will serve the public in the following ways:

- Reduce costs associated with emergency department visits for preventable oral health problems.
- Improve pregnancy outcomes for low- income women.
- Improve self-esteem, employability, decrease absenteeism, and improve mental health of disadvantaged adults.
- Improve chronic health condition for underserved and disadvantaged adults.
- Improve access to dental services for adults living in poverty.

For these reasons I strongly support **HB 1754 option 2**. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Steven C. Pine D.D.S., Dental Director
West Hawaii Community Health Center

Bill: HB 1754, Relating to Adult Dental Medicaid Benefits

Hearing Date & Time: Thursday, February 24, 2022, 2:00pm

Committees: House Committee on Finance

Testifier: Nancy Partika, RN, MPH

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice-Chair Yamashita, and Members of the House Committee on Finance:

My name is Nancy Partika, and I am the Hawaii grassroots representative for OPEN (the Oral Health Progress and Equity Network). I have worked to help identify and address oral health disparities in Hawaii at the community level for the past 5 years.

Hawaii has visibly struggled for decades with oral health disparities and problems accessing care for its most needy. The 2009 abolishment of adult dental benefits under Medicaid and the problems that resulted from adults receiving emergency-only care since then has spiraled, while the State continues to pay out millions per year in acute oral health emergency room care and for other health-related services statewide that does not provide adequate oral health care or support to our at-risk populations such as those on Medicaid.

According to a newly-completed 2021 JABSOM/HOHC study of ER use statewide for acute oral health conditions, adult Medicaid beneficiaries represent about 25% of Hawaii's population, but they are 47% of all dental services provided by ERs statewide.

Between 2016 and 2020, Medicaid recipients averaged 2,700 emergency room visits per year for acute oral health conditions, totaling \$21,700,000 in charges for outpatient emergency room services alone. Neighbor island ERs on Hawaii island and Kauai have higher rates of ER use for acute dental conditions.

Fiscally, it seems logical that these millions of dollars that could be potentially saved via fewer ER visits and instead wisely utilize a portion of those dollars to pay upfront for preventative and restorative dental care benefits for Medicaid recipients.

Poor oral health is already proven to be linked to an array of acute and chronic health conditions, including: heart disease, diabetes, stroke, depression, low birth weight and premature birth. Researchers have mapped linkages from chronic dental pain to end-stage renal disease, liver transplants, opioid-related emergency department visits, and opioid-related crime. These co-conditions are made worse by having poor oral health, and the care of the oral health of chronically ill or pregnant can be another significant potential area for return on investment. We now recognize that not intervening in oral health conditions early and preventively will cost much more later on in unintended direct and indirect costs.

Currently most states now offer adult Medicaid recipients preventive and restorative adult oral health benefits. By adding a comprehensive or limited dental services benefit, Hawaii's adults on Medicaid should be able to experience fewer oral health-related ER visits, with improvements to their chronic disease risks and overall health status. Broader Medicaid dental benefits for adults would not only support individual health and well-being among Hawaii's most vulnerable adults, but could also improve the employment status and socio-economic strength of our communities.

The Hawaii MQD-DHS and the State Legislature received the Hawaii-specific fiscal analysis from the Health Policy Institute of the American Dental Association in February 2020 that projected both costs and cost-benefits to restore Hawaii adult dental benefits. Three options for reinstating dental benefits were provided at that time.

It has been 12 years since adult dental benefits (other than emergency) have been accessible, and so we should anticipate that many adults on Medicaid will be needing more than basic/skeletal preventive

dental care. It is therefore recommended that the House advocate for Option 2, which would enable Medicaid recipients to get a wider range of diagnostic, preventive and restorative services, as well as basic prosthodontic and periodontal services, as needed.

The difference in State funding would be \$8,823,781 in state funds for option 2, versus \$3,466,328 in State funds for option 1. Federal funding from would provide the remainder of the costs of the benefits under the Federal Medicaid Assistance Percentage (FMAP).

Limited coverage under option 1 would be capped per recipient and may only cover an annual exam, fluoride treatment, bi-annual cleanings, one set of bite wing X-rays per year and one non-emergency tooth extraction or filling per year. As you can imagine, dental care for someone who has been without any for a long while is likely to exceed this limited benefit. It seems that reinstating coverage to the second option makes more sense, given the high costs paid for poor oral health exacerbated co-conditions and visits to the ER for acute dental care.

What is important to note that this fiscal analysis also projects that over time, additional medical care cost savings estimates range from \$1.9 million per year to \$5.3 million, due to health status improvements in co-occurring health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, pregnancy, and fewer ER visits for services

Your strong support for this HB 1754 is respectfully requested—Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

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**Summary of Findings for Statewide ER Visits with a
Dental-Related Diagnosis: Hawai'i 2016-2020 (JABSOM-HOHC Study-2021)**

1. There was a total of 29,536 ER visits with a dental related diagnosis by adults aged 21 years and older
2. 67% (19,691) of the adult visits had a principal dental diagnosis that they visited the ER
3. A significant proportion of the ER visits with a principal dental-related diagnosis were treated:
 - in Honolulu County (56%, 11,118)
 - for those aged 21-44 years old (62%, 12,138)
 - for Medicaid recipients (49%, 9,680)
 - Native Hawaiian/Part Native Hawaiian (24%, 5,018) patients
4. A large portion of Medicaid claims for ER visits with a principal diagnosis were submitted for Native Hawaiians/Part Native Hawaiian (31%, 2,991) patients
5. Medicaid claims constituted 45% of the cumulative total charges for the ER visits with a principal dental-related diagnosis (\$12.3M/27.5M)
6. An average of 10% of patients who visited ER for dental-related conditions revisited the ER at least twice in the same year
7. Higher rates of ER visits with a dental-related diagnosis were found for Hawai'i County, Kaua'i County, and in 21-44 year old patients.

Date: February 22, 2022

To: The Honorable Sylvia Luke, Chair
The Honorable Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Finance

Re: **Strong Support for HB1754 SD1**, Relating to Adult Dental Medicaid Benefits

Hrg: Thursday, February 24, 2022 at 2:00pm, Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

Aloha House Committee on Finance,

As a healthcare professional and member of the East Hawaii community, I am writing in **strong support of HB1754 SD1**, which appropriates funds to restore diagnostic, preventive, and restorative dental benefits to adult Medicaid enrollees provided the department of human services obtains maximum federal matching funds available and pursues all funding sources, including private grants, prior to expending any general fund appropriations.

Oral health is essential to overall health and well-being. Extending dental coverage to adult Medicaid patients with chronic health conditions like diabetes and heart disease can lead to cost savings in related areas of health care spending.

Since adult Medicaid diagnostic, preventive and restorative dental services were eliminated in 2009 Hawaii has seen increased Emergency Room utilization and significantly increased costs for otherwise preventable oral health conditions.

Oral health inequity is an issue in Hawaii. Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander populations, and those on Neighbor Islands are at greater risk for poor oral health and limited access to oral health care.

Oral health is health and reinstating these benefits is a cost-effective, person-centered approach to improving overall health in our communities.

Please support reinstating adult dental Medicaid benefits.

I **strongly support HB1754 SD1** and respectfully ask you to pass this bill out of committee.

Many thanks for your consideration,

Forrest Batz, PharmD
Keaau, HI

HB-1754-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2022 12:53:16 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Rosie Vierra	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I write in support of HB 1754. As a dental hygienist as well as an advocate to help those who have less than most. The reasons below summarize my plea to pass HB1754;

- Diagnostic, preventive and restorative dental services for **adults on Medicaid were eliminated in 2009.**
- Hawaii is currently one of only 13 states that provide emergency care only.
- Since 2009, we've seen **increased Emergency Room utilization and increased costs related to otherwise preventable conditions.**
- The ADA reported in 2016 that ER visits nationwide continued to increase in 2012, **costing the US health care system \$1.6 billion per year at an average cost of \$749 per visit.**
- Recent data show that between 2016 and 2020 there was a total of 29,536 ER visits with a dental related diagnosis among adults aged 21 years and older.67% (19,691) of these visits had a principal dental diagnosis as the reason they visited the ER

Mahalo

February 24, 2022, 2:00pm Conference Room 308

Dear Honorable Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair, House Committee on Finance

Dear Honorable Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair, House Committee on Finance

My name is Kylene Shimamoto and I am in support of HB 1754, HD1. I have Medicaid. I have waited for a long time for help with my teeth and dentist.

February 24, 2022, 2:00pm Conference Room 308

Dear Honorable Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair, House Committee on Finance

Dear Honorable Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair, House Committee on Finance

My name is Herman Ki'ili and I am in support of HB 1754, HD1. I receive only one time a year for my dentist visit. I want to have good teeth because one day I want to get married. I have a fiancé now and I need more help from my dentist so I can eat my food good. Please pass HB 1754, HD1. Medicaid is very important so I can get teeth services to help me live in the community. Thank you.

February 24, 2022, 2:00pm Conference Room 308

Dear Honorable Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair, House Committee on Finance

Dear Honorable Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair, House Committee on Finance

My name is Audrey Ayer and I am in support of HB 1754, HD1. People like me need more dentist Medicaid help so me and my friends can live in our homes. Please pass HB 1754, HD1. Thank you.

February 24, 2022, 2:00pm Conference Room 308

Dear Honorable Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair, House Committee on Finance

Dear Honorable Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair, House Committee on Finance

My name is Bathey Fong and I am in support of HB 1754, HD1. I really need a good dentist and want to make sure my gums don't hurt and my teeth don't hurt and I can eat without pain. I have Medicaid and I am a person with a disability and in a wheelchair because I cannot walk good. Please pass HB 1754, HD1. Thank you.

February 24, 2022, 2:00pm Conference Room 308

Dear Honorable Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair, House Committee on Finance

Dear Honorable Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair, House Committee on Finance

My name is Nicole Kelly and I am in support of HB 1754, HD1. I want to be able to choose a dentist to help me have good teeth and clean teeth. Please pass HB 1754, HD1. Thank you.

February 24, 2022, 2:00pm Conference Room 308

Dear Honorable Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair, House Committee on Finance

Dear Honorable Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair, House Committee on Finance

My name is Ho'opi'o Balaz and I am in support of HB 1754, HD1. I need a good dentist, like my aunty who is a good doctor. Please pass HB 1754, HD1. Thank you.

February 24, 2022, 2:00pm Conference Room 308

Dear Honorable Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair, House Committee on Finance

Dear Honorable Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair, House Committee on Finance

My name is Kaili Swan and I am in support of HB 1754, HD1. I definitely want to have better dental care. I sometimes don't like to go to my dentist because I scared of the drill. I need help choosing a good dentist that can help me feel better when I go. Thank you.

February 24, 2022, 2:00pm Conference Room 308

Dear Honorable Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair, House Committee on Finance

Dear Honorable Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair, House Committee on Finance

My name is David Beatovich and I support of HB 1754, HD1. I want to visit the dentist more and more.
Thank you.

February 24, 2022, 2:00pm Conference Room 308

Dear Honorable Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair, House Committee on Finance

Dear Honorable Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair, House Committee on Finance

My name is Timothy Renken and I am in support of HB 1754, HD1. I have not gone to the dentist because I need more help with my teeth to be fixed. I lost almost all of my front teeth and cannot eat many foods because it hurts too much. I cannot use a toothbrush and toothpaste because it hurts to use it. I only use a mouthwash to rinse my teeth because it is hurts too much. I don't have good Medicaid dentist insurance, so I only go dentist one time a year. I have kidney stones because I can only eat some kinds of food. I am getting worse. Please please please pass HB 1754, HD1. Thank you.

February 24, 2022, 2:00pm Conference Room 308

Dear Honorable Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair, House Committee on Finance

Dear Honorable Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair, House Committee on Finance

My name is Vaipapa Soliai and I am in support of HB 1754, HD1. I don't have any teeth and need more dentist appointments to help me get teeth. I am a person with disabilities that needs support with my electric wheelchair. Please pass HB 1754, HD1. Thank you.

February 24, 2022, 2:00pm Conference Room 308

Dear Honorable Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair, House Committee on Finance

Dear Honorable Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair, House Committee on Finance

My name is Amber Arakawa and I would like to tell you that I support HB 1754, HD1. I need more dentist Medicaid and do not want to lose my insurance.

February 24, 2022, 2:00pm Conference Room 308

Dear Honorable Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair, House Committee on Finance

Dear Honorable Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair, House Committee on Finance

My name is Cheryl Derby and I support HB 1754, HD1. I am a person with a disability and want to have more appointments at my dentist.

February 24, 2022, 2:00pm Conference Room 308

Dear Honorable Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair, House Committee on Finance

Dear Honorable Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair, House Committee on Finance

My name is Sol Ray Duncan and I want to see HB 1754, HD1 become law. I know I need to have more checkups at my dentist. I want to have clean teeth and strong teeth, and teeth that is not sore.

February 24, 2022, 2:00pm Conference Room 308

Dear Honorable Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair, House Committee on Finance

Dear Honorable Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair, House Committee on Finance

My name is Celeste Kagimoto and I want HB 1754, HD1 to pass because I have a disability and I go to Lanakila Day program and need more dental help.

February 24, 2022, 2:00pm Conference Room 308

Dear Honorable Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair, House Committee on Finance

Dear Honorable Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair, House Committee on Finance

My name is Paul Landingin and I want you to pass HB 1754, HD1. I think I need more checkups at the dentist. Sometimes my teeth are sore but I cannot go dentist because I am told I don't have any more insurance coverage. I don't know why. I tell my caregiver I have Medicaid, but I don't understand how come I cannot fix my teeth. Can you help me and my caregiver have more dentist fixing appointment?

February 24, 2022, 2:00pm Conference Room 308

Dear Honorable Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair, House Committee on Finance

Dear Honorable Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair, House Committee on Finance

My name is Michael Lee and have a disability and I want to have more checkups on my teeth please. I want to have teeth that work good. I support HB 1754, HD1.

February 24, 2022, 2:00pm Conference Room 308

Dear Honorable Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair, House Committee on Finance

Dear Honorable Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair, House Committee on Finance

My name is Ada McFeely and I need your help to pass HB 1754, HD1. I support HB 1754, HD1. Someone always call me a duck because my teeth and mouth cannot be fix. I want to change my teeth and mouth so no more duck calling in my life.

February 24, 2022, 2:00pm Conference Room 308

Dear Honorable Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair, House Committee on Finance

Dear Honorable Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair, House Committee on Finance

My name is Ryan Nishikawa and I am person who has Down's Syndrome and support HB 1754, HD1. I am at Lanakila day program and I like my dentist, but only one time I can go in one year.

February 24, 2022, 2:00pm Conference Room 308

Dear Honorable Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair, House Committee on Finance

Dear Honorable Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair, House Committee on Finance

My name is Johnelle Santos and I have a disability and I support HB 1754, HD1. I want to have pretty teeth too.

February 24, 2022, 2:00pm Conference Room 308

Dear Honorable Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair, House Committee on Finance

Dear Honorable Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair, House Committee on Finance

My name is Michelle Muralt, I support HB 1754, HD1. I have Down's syndrome and help other friends who have disabilities to have a better life. I want to see us have more dentist visit to fix our teeth and have someplace where a dentist can fix our teeth and help us to have braces or to have retainers if we need them, or clean our teeth and make it straight again.

February 24, 2022, 2:00pm Conference Room 308

Dear Honorable Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair, House Committee on Finance

Dear Honorable Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair, House Committee on Finance

My name is Zosimo Arista, I support HB 1754, HD1. I work with people who have Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities and hope that the Dental Medicaid shortages can be changed so as to see true health benefits to people with disabilities and statewide financial benefit savings, lowering emergency room visits for dental problems and providing healthy living habits for people with disabilities.

TESTIMONY FOR HB 1754, HD1

Date of Hearing/Time:

February 24, 2022, 2:00 pm

Committee:

Committee on Finance

February 22, 2022

Dear Chair Sylvia Luke, Vice Chair Kyle T. Yamashita, and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support on HB1754, HD1 relating to adult dental Medicaid benefits.

My name is Dr. Andrew Tseu and currently employed as a community center dentist. I am submitting testimony as a Hawaii resident. Hawaii's oral health services has not been given adequate attention and resources necessary to support good oral health care in our state since Medicaid adult dental benefits were drastically cut in 2009.

Oral Health is essential to overall health. Oral health is a crucial part of a person's physical, psychological, social and economic health and well-being. Extending dental coverage to patients with chronic health conditions like diabetes and heart disease can lead to cost savings in related areas of health care spending. Missing or broken teeth also create social barriers for adults to find and maintain gainful employment in our community.

We are currently one of only 13 states that provide emergency care only. As a result of our past decade of minimal coverage for dental care, Hawaii's emergency rooms have been overutilized for otherwise preventable dental conditions to the tune of thousands of visits per year, costing millions of dollars annually.

As a part of our commitment to improve oral health in Hawaii, we believe that basic coverage of dental services for adults is a critical factor in ensuring access to appropriate and timely oral health care.

I strongly advocate for Option 2, which would enable Medicaid recipients to get a wider range of diagnostic, preventive, and restorative services. as well as basic prosthodontic and periodontal services, as needed.

Please feel free to contact me at (808) 781-3613 to discuss my testimony further.

Best regards,



Andrew Tseu, D.D.S., J.D.

HB-1754-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2022 8:22:13 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Judith Wilhoite	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support on HB/SB relating to adult dental medicaid benefits.

Restoring adult dental medicaid benefits is important because providing dental coverage to patients with chronic health conditions like diabetes and heart disease can lead to cost savings in related areas of health care spending. It's estimated additional medical care cost savings range from \$1.9 million to \$5.3 million.

Please support reinstating adult dental medicaid benefits. Oral health is health and reinstating these benefits is a cost-effective, person-centered approach to making our communities healthier.

Thank you,

Judith Wilhoite

HB-1754-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2022 8:42:12 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Susan Pcola_Davis	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support this bill to provide TOTAL oral healthcare for all adults on medicaid. Many illnesses are compounded by poor oral care. Adults on Medicaid do not have the income to take care of their oral hygiene. Please pass this bill for all adults on medicaid.

HB-1754-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2022 8:54:03 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Ron Matayoshi	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Finance Chair and Committee,

I support HB 1754.

Supporting HB 1754 is a no-brainer. Dental (Oral) health is important to an individuals physical, mental, social and economic well-being. Restore adult dental medicaid benefits to those that are struggling during and after the pandemic.

Respectfully,

Ron Matayoshi, MSW, MCH LEND Hawaii faculty

Date: February 22, 2022

To: Sylvia Luke, Chair
Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Finance

RE: Thursday, February 24, 2022, House Committee on Finance in **Support of HB 1754**

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Shelbi Nakano, a Master of Public Health (MPH) student, and I am testifying in **support of House Bill 1754** relating to adult dental Medicaid benefits.

Individuals who are under Hawai'i's Medicaid plan, including those who are low income and people with disabilities, have suffered for far too long. Over a decade has passed since dental health insurance benefits were dropped, forcing hundreds of thousands of adult Medicaid recipients to pay out of pocket for dental services.

Although maintaining good oral health and hygiene may be an afterthought for most, limiting access to affordable, quality dental health care services will have community-wide repercussions that may cause an even heavier financial burden for the State. Because Hawai'i does not provide extended coverage for dental care, Medicaid recipients are discouraged from seeking out dental services and receiving treatments, despite being in pain, due to fear of not being able to afford the care.

In fact, there has been an increase in ER visits as well as a surge in community clinic visits due to oral health issues within the last decade. This is a direct impact from adult Medicaid recipients having their dental benefits revoked. Individuals with chronic health conditions, such as diabetes and high blood pressure, need consistent dental health care services as they are at much higher risk for serious oral diseases. In order to prevent the onset of oral diseases, which are extremely painful and expensive, extending adult dental Medicaid benefits is necessary. Taking such preventative measures will inspire efforts in closing the gap of oral health inequity in Hawai'i.

Thank you so much for your time and for the opportunity to testify in **support of HB 1754**.

Mahalo,

Shelbi Nakano

A dentist's testimony

Dr. Don Sand, 54-135 Honomu place, Hauula, HI 96717

Every person living in Hawaii deserves a healthy smile, enough teeth for chewing nutritious food, and to have their mouth free of pain, infection, and disease.

My name is Dr. Don Sand DDS. I have been working in the community health system of Hawaii for the last 7 years. In my 30-year career I have never seen so many deserving people suffer from the lack of dental care.

Oral health is the only disease in our modern times that is both preventable and curable. When dental care is not available to the majority of our population have untreated oral health that result in many collateral problems affecting a person's health, suffering/pain, mental health, low self-esteem, social isolation and a loss of personal financial health.

Dental infections not only result in unnecessary ER visits, but patients with chronic tooth and gums diseases are not able to chew food properly. This lack of nutrition results in exacerbating many whole-body diseases and results in poor immune systems. Untreated tooth and gum infections may result in cardiovascular diseases, systemic infections and may result in death.

Without dental treatment our people cannot be competitive to get a job when they have no teeth to smile with in an interview. Having shame of their bad teeth results in loss of needed socializing needed to maintain emotional and mental health. Without adult Medicaid many deserving people and Kupuna continue to have teeth that could be saved become lost without insurance to help the costs to repair their teeth.

With a compassionate adult Medicaid plan an early diagnosis and early dental treatment can resolve problems that are small they often be fixed with very little cost. If easy treatment is unavailable then often there are huge costs from deferring dental treatment. One good example, is when one small cavity if fixed early it could be a low-cost treatment such as a simple filling. But if untreated this simple problem will continue to damage the tooth and could result in a root canal, a crown, a gum surgery that could cost \$3,000 or more when scaled to private practice fees. If the finances are not be available at that point then the tooth is most often removed. Without adult Medicaid there are minimal provisions helping adults even replace the missing teeth. This sad scenario can be repeated as 32 nightmares for the patient as each tooth that can be saved is lost. With the lack oral health care for our people of Hawaii they lose self-esteem, they lose their ability to get nutrition, they lose job opportunities, lose social opportunities, they lose the joy of being pain free and they lose elements of quality life.

Having a health smile is worth millions for each deserving adult and should be considered as a human right. If there is one big thing that we can could do within our influence and leave a humanitarian legacy, let's us look at reinstating Adult Medicaid as the single best return in investment towards restoring the priceless oral health and well-being of our Island people.

HB-1754-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2022 8:43:58 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Mary Freitas	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

My name is Mary Freitas and I support HB1754 to restore Adult Medicaid Benefits. I believe this proposal to restore preventative health care measures will save money as medicaid dollars will not be spent on emergency room visits. I believe that everyone has a right to access medical and dental care and right now, individuals on medicaid are not able to receive dental services. Also, when they do go to their doctors and to the emergency room, the nurses and doctors are not as well equipped to handle dental emergencies as Dentists and Dental Hygenist are.

HB-1754-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2022 1:58:08 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Simran Sidhu	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am testifying in **SUPPORT of HB1754**. Adults on Medicaid deserve to receive diagnostic, preventative, routine dental care. This could prevent poor health outcomes including heart disease, diabetes, depression, low birth weight, and trips to the emergency room. According to the Hawaii Oral Health Coalition, nearly half of ER visits with a principal dental-related diagnosis between 2016-2020 were Medicaid recipients, costing over \$12 million. Investing in preventative care now will save money and improve health outcomes later by reducing chronic disease, pregnancy-related complications, and emergency room visits.

I strongly urge the passage of HB1754.

Thank you,

Simran Sidhu

HB-1754-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2022 2:21:36 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Paul Chung	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and committee members,

I am writing to testify in support of restoring adult dental medicaid benefits and to request a level of funding permitting a denture benefit.

As a dentist at a community center, I see every day why dental benefits are important. Our current emergency coverage helps alleviate excruciating pain and suffering (which I've had patients describe as "worse than giving birth" or "worse than the recovery after my car accident"). Even so, we could be doing much more. By reimplementing routine coverage, we can do a better job of anticipating and preventing painful oral problems before they occur.

I would also like to highlight dentures as a necessary part of dental coverage. When a patient comes to our clinic, and the treatment recommendation is dentures, we are in a difficult place. Usually, the patient's teeth are incredibly broken and infected, often the result of dry mouth related to polypharmacy or lack of access to routine care over the years. To add to the physical pain, even at a community health center, at the most generous level of sliding scale discount, a set of dentures can cost approximately \$700 out of pocket, financial pain unbearable for patients facing housing/food insecurity. This can place patients in the impossible position of choosing between rent, food, and having teeth.

Just this morning, I saw a patient like this. With no upper teeth, she could not eat, and she did not have money for dentures. I could only explain her options and watch as she left in tears.

Please support reinstating adult dental medicaid benefits, and please do so at a level to include a denture benefit. Consider the importance of your own teeth and all the things they allow you to do, like eating, talking, and smiling. Oral health is a basic human need and should be available to everyone.

Thank you,

Paul Chung, DMD

HB-1754-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2022 9:37:25 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Laura Ramirez	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

I strongly support this bill HB1754 and so should you because of course dental care directly affects overall health, the ability to eat, and we know that infection can harm the entire person and body including the heart. This is good common sense.

Mahalo,

Laura Ramirez

Kapa'a Kaua'i 96746

HB-1754-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2022 10:33:40 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Brian Burdt	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support HB1754 HD1 relating to adult dental Medicaid benefits. It has been too long for many people to have access to appropriate diagnostic, preventive, and restorative dental benefits. This could be life changing for so many people of Hawaii and would reduce the amount of emergency dental visits at the various hospitals statewide. I strongly urge you to pass this bill to bring about some health equity for those with Medicaid coverage. Mahalo.

Brian Burdt

Maui