
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO ORAL HEALTH.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that Hawaii's oral health
2 program is not meeting the needs of residents. Unlike forty-two
3 other states, this State's department of health does not retain
4 dedicated oral health staff to assess and monitor the
5 population's oral health status, community needs, and assets;
6 inform and educate people about oral health; mobilize community
7 partners to leverage resources; develop, champion, and implement
8 policies, laws, and plans that support oral health efforts;
9 reduce barriers to care; assure a competent and skilled public
10 and private oral health workforce; and improve public oral
11 health functions through ongoing evaluation and continuous
12 quality improvement.

13 The legislature further finds that while the adult medicaid
14 population has limited access to dental care, there is a lack of
15 dental providers for this population. The legislature notes
16 that federally qualified health centers in each county are a
17 critical medical and oral health safety net and approximately



1 forty-two thousand people of all ages and covered by all types
2 of health insurance were served by the health centers in 2021.

3 The legislature additionally finds that while the
4 department of health operates five small dental clinics and also
5 serves individuals who are elderly, blind, intellectually
6 disabled, developmentally disabled, and mentally ill, all
7 clinics are located in the city and county of Honolulu. The
8 State does not operate dental clinics to serve similar
9 populations in other counties. The legislature notes that three
10 hundred thirty-nine dentists in the State currently accept and
11 treat adults covered by medicaid.

12 While the legislature allocated more than \$25,000,000 in
13 2022 to reinstate adult medicaid dental benefits, the
14 legislature is concerned that the current oral health
15 infrastructure is insufficient to deliver oral health services
16 to those most in need.

17 The purpose of this Act is to:

- 18 (1) Establish an oral health task force to review
19 information and data on the status of oral health in
20 the State and make recommendations to improve the
21 State's oral health infrastructure; and



1 (2) Appropriate funds to help facilitate the work of the
2 oral health task force.

3 SECTION 2. (a) There is established an oral health task
4 force to be placed within the department of health for
5 administrative purposes.

6 (b) The oral health task force shall:

7 (1) Review all information and data relating to oral
8 health status in Hawaii, including the Hawaii Oral
9 Health Coalition 2022-2023 environmental scan, for
10 evidence of key oral health issues and evident areas
11 for action;

12 (2) Review all information and data relating to the
13 department of health oral health program functions and
14 processes and make recommendations regarding
15 organizational structure, personnel needs, contracted
16 service needs, required resources, and potential
17 additional funding and support;

18 (3) Review and analyze systemic issues in oral health
19 services and processes statewide and make
20 recommendations for systemic changes and improvements
21 to improve equity in oral health;



- 1 (4) Develop an oral health strategic blueprint that
2 includes goals, objectives, specific actions, and
3 resources needed;
- 4 (5) Act as a systemic facilitator for key oral health
5 stakeholders so that complex and problematic issues
6 can be discussed and addressed in a timely and
7 effective manner;
- 8 (6) Ensure that there are agreed-upon community metrics
9 for analyzing the development and implementation of
10 medicaid funding for oral health; and
- 11 (7) Make recommendations to state and county policymakers
12 regarding systemic actions recommended to improve oral
13 health in Hawaii.
- 14 (c) The oral health task force shall consist of the
15 following members:
- 16 (1) One representative of the family health services
17 division of the department of health, to be appointed
18 by the director of health;
- 19 (2) One representative of the developmental disabilities
20 division of the department of health, to be appointed
21 by the director of health;



- 1 (3) One representative of the med-QUEST division of the
2 department of human services, to be appointed by the
3 director of human services;
- 4 (4) One representative of the student services branch of
5 the department of education, to be appointed by the
6 superintendent of education;
- 7 (5) One representative of the state council on
8 developmental disabilities, to be appointed by the
9 speaker of the house of representatives;
- 10 (6) A faculty member of the university of Hawaii at Manoa
11 Nancy Atmospera-Walch school of nursing dental hygiene
12 program, to be appointed by the speaker of the house
13 of representatives;
- 14 (7) One representative of the university of Hawaii John A.
15 Burns school of medicine, to be appointed by the
16 president of the senate;
- 17 (8) One representative of the county of Hawaii who is a
18 department of health employee or community oral health
19 representative, to be appointed by the president of
20 the senate;



- 1 (9) One representative of the county of Maui, to be
2 appointed by the speaker of the house of
3 representatives;
- 4 (10) One representative of the county of Kauai, to be
5 appointed by the president of the senate;
- 6 (11) One representative of the Hawaii Oral Health
7 Coalition, to be invited by the president of the
8 senate;
- 9 (12) One representative of the Hawaii Dental Association,
10 to be invited by the speaker of the house of
11 representatives;
- 12 (13) One representative of the Hawaii Dental Service, to be
13 invited by the president of the senate;
- 14 (14) One representative of the Hawaii Dental Service
15 Foundation, to be invited by the speaker of the house
16 of representatives;
- 17 (15) One representative of a Hawaii dental medicaid
18 insurer, to be invited by the president of the senate;
- 19 (16) Two community advocates for medicaid and oral health,
20 one each to be invited by the speaker of the house of



1 representatives and president of the senate,
2 respectively;

3 (17) One representative of the Hawaii Primary Care
4 Association, to be invited by the president of the
5 senate;

6 (18) One representative of the Native Hawaiian Health Care
7 Systems, to be invited by the speaker of the house of
8 representatives;

9 (19) One representative of Papa Ola Lokahi, to be invited
10 by the president of the senate;

11 (20) One representative of the Hawaii Dental Hygienists'
12 Association, to be invited by the speaker of the house
13 of representatives; and

14 (21) One representative advocate from the private practice
15 dental community who is working with the adult
16 medicaid population and other medicaid-associated
17 dentists, to be invited by the director of health.

18 (d) The representative of the family health services
19 division of the department of health shall serve as the
20 chairperson of the task force. If the representative of the
21 family health services division of the department of health is



1 unable to serve as the chairperson of the task force, the
2 members of the task force shall select a chairperson from among
3 the remaining members.

4 (e) The oral health task force shall submit an interim
5 report of its findings and recommendations to the legislature no
6 later than twenty days prior to the convening of the regular
7 session of 2026. The department of health shall submit a final
8 report of the oral health task force's findings and
9 recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the
10 legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
11 the regular session of 2028.

12 (f) The task force shall cease to exist on June 30, 2028.

13 (g) The task force shall be exempt from part I of chapter
14 92, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

15 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
16 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
17 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and
18 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal
19 year 2026-2027 for the family health services division of the
20 department of health to contract with a consultant to facilitate
21 the work of the oral health task force, including completing the



1 interim and final reports required by subsection (e) of section
2 2 of this Act.

3 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
4 of health for the purposes of this Act.

5 SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general
6 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
7 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and
8 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal
9 year 2026-2027 for the establishment of one permanent full-time
10 equivalent (1.0 FTE) program specialist V position within the
11 family health services division of the department of health.

12 This position shall:

13 (1) Collect, analyze, and evaluate information relevant to
14 specific oral health policy issues and related
15 material to enable oral health task force members to
16 develop informed policy recommendations affecting oral
17 health care;

18 (2) Serve as the representative of the department of
19 health oral health program to the Hawaii Oral Health
20 Coalition;



1 (3) Develop, administer, monitor, and provide oversight of
2 the contract for a consultant to facilitate the work
3 of the oral health task force; and

4 (4) Serve as a liaison between the department of health
5 and other state agencies on the oral health task
6 force.

7 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
8 of health for the purposes of this Act.

9 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 3000.



Report Title:

Department of Health; Oral Health Task Force; Position; Reports; Appropriation

Description:

Establishes an Oral Health Task Force to review the status of oral health in the State and make recommendations to improve the State's oral health infrastructure. Establishes one full-time equivalent program specialist V position. Appropriates funds. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

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