

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

Legislative Document

No. 1124

S. P. 336

In Senate, March 19, 1975

On Motion of Senator Katz, of Kennebec, referred to the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs. Sent down for concurrence and ordered printed.

HARRY N. STARBRANCH, Secretary

Presented by Senator Graham of Cumberland.

Cosponsors: Senator Curtis of Penobscot and Senator Trotzky of Penobscot.

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD NINETEEN HUNDRED
SEVENTY-FIVE

AN ACT Providing Funds to Improve the Dental Health of Adults in Maine.

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine, as follows:

22 MRSA Pt. 4-A is enacted to read:

PART 4-A

DENTAL HEALTH

CHAPTER 422

ADULT DENTAL CARE

§ 2111. Dental health program

There is established within the Office of Dental Health, Department of Health and Welfare, a fund to improve the dental health of adults in Maine. The purpose of this fund is to provide aid to those adults who in the opinion of a physician or a dentist, or both, have oral health problems that are a threat or impairment to their general health and well-being.

§ 2112. Administration

The fund will be administered by the Office of Dental Health which will establish procedures and guidelines for applying for aid and will determine specific eligibility criteria with advice from the Dental Health Advisory Board.

§ 2113. Eligibility

Any adult who is eligible for any benefits under the Title XIX Medicaid Program or who otherwise is judged to be in financial need by the Director of the Office of Dental Health and who in the opinion of a physician or dentist, or both, has a dental problem that is a threat or impairment to their general health and well-being shall be eligible for aid provided under this Part.

§ 2114. Fees

The Director of the Office of Dental Health shall also be empowered to establish a reasonable fee scale based on income of the applicant for any services rendered under this Part. Where appropriate no fee shall be levied to those persons unable to afford any costs.

§ 2115. Authorized dental services and supplies eligible for funding

The approval of any individual as eligible for services by the Office of the Director of Dental Health shall constitute authorization, after a treatment plan is approved by the Office of the Director of Dental Health, for any and all of the following services:

1. Emergency care. Dental services required for emergency care or for the relief of pain or acute infection or for both;
2. Oral examination. Oral examination, including treatment plan if necessary;
3. Radiographs. Periapical, bitewing, occlusal and extraoral radiographs, as required;
4. Oral prophylaxis. Oral prophylaxis, including cleaning, supra and subgingival scaling and polishing of teeth;
5. Restoration. Restoration of carious permanent teeth with
 - A. Silver amalgam,
 - B. Silicate cement,
 - C. Plastic materials,
 - D. Stainless steel crowns when supported by adequate justification;
6. Pulpotomy. Pulpotomy for permanent or primary teeth;
7. Endodontic therapy. Endodontic therapy for incisor or cuspid teeth, however, prior authorization shall be required if complete endodontic therapy is required for more than one tooth or if a crown is required to supplement endodontic therapy on one or more teeth;
8. Extraction. Extraction of infected or nonrestorable teeth; however, prior authorization shall be required if one or more extractions will require the construction of a dental prosthetic appliance to alleviate a serious health condition or one which affects employability;

9. Repair of dentures. Repair of full or partial dentures, recementing crowns and fixed bridges, replacing facings on bridges; and

10. Prosthetic appliances. All dental prosthetic appliances which shall be furnished only if required to alleviate a serious health condition which may lead to a serious physical health problem, including one which affects employability.

Sec. 2. Appropriation. There is appropriated to the Department of Health and Welfare from the General Fund the sum of \$400,000 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1976 and \$420,000 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1977. These funds will be used to provide care to approximately 1,000 to 2,000 adults, primarily elderly, for whom there are currently no services. The breakdown shall be as follows:

	1975-76		1976-77
HEALTH AND WELFARE, DEPARTMENT OF			
Office of Dental Health			
Personal Services	(2) \$ 15,000	(2)	\$ 16,500
All Other	384,000		403,000
Capital Expenditures	1,000		500
	<hr/>		<hr/>
	\$400,000		\$420,000

STATEMENT OF FACT

The purpose of this bill is to improve the dental health of adults in the State who are in acute need of care and are without the financial means to pay for necessary care.

Dental disease is a major public health problem in Maine; the Federal Government reports that Maine has the worst rate of dental disease in the country; dental disease effects 98% of the population; and has been called the State's number one health problem. Studies by the United States Public Health Service show that 50% of those 65 years or older have lost all their teeth in one or both jaws.

According to the 1970 Report of the Governor's Committee on Aging: "It is generally recognized that Maine has a serious dental problem at all age levels caused by lack of dentists, inaccessibility to present dentists by many people and a general lack of concern and understanding on the part of the populace. The problems of dental health become acute as inadequate dentition and ill fitting dentures contribute to undernutrition in old age. Poor dentition results in inadequate preparation of food for digestion and leads to a gradual avoidance of foods which require chewing. Thus, important food items like meat and the bulk-forming fruit and vegetables are gradually and progressively bypassed.

In rural areas, it is estimated that 22% of the elderly have never seen a dentist, as compared with 15% in urban areas. Another 18% of the rural

elderly population have not seen a dentist in the past 5 years, while 13% of the urban elderly have not. Health agencies in Maine stated that dental care is one of the major problems of the elderly.”

This bill will help improve this situation by providing care to those in greatest needs.