

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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STATE OF MAINE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
118TH LEGISLATURE
SECOND REGULAR SESSION

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" to H.P. 1515, L.D. 2137, Bill, "An Act to Address the Crisis in Access to Dental Care for Low-income Children"

Amend the bill by striking out everything after the enacting clause and before the summary and inserting in its place the following:

Sec. 1. 22 MRSA §3174-R is enacted to read:

§3174-R. Access to dental services for children under Medicaid

The department shall increase access to comprehensive dental care for children under the Medicaid program so that services are received on a timely basis in the regions of the State in which they live, in accordance with this section.

1. Telephone referral service. By April 1, 1998, the department shall establish a toll-free telephone referral service to provide individuals with information on dental services and assistance in accessing dental services. The telephone service must provide persons calling about dental services with oral notice of the availability of assistance in arranging for appointments for dental screening and necessary corrective treatment, transportation to dental appointments and other services necessary to ensure access.

2. Increasing providers. The department shall work with a statewide dental association and dentists in the State to increase the number of providers of dental care and the number participating in the Medicaid program.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT

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3. Goal. It is the goal of the Legislature that children enrolled in the Medicaid program in all regions of the State have the same access to dental care as children enrolled in a private dental insurance programs.

4. Annual report. By February 15, 1999 and annually thereafter, the department shall submit to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over health and human services matters an annual report containing information related to the progress of the department in meeting the goal stated in subsection 3 and an action plan to increase access to dental care. The report must include an analysis of the progress being made in increasing access, the problems incurred within the prior year and corrective action to be taken. The action plan must consider the following strategies to increase access: nonprofit clinics; purchase of practice clinics; enhanced reimbursement for dentists serving a large number of children under the Medicaid program; and contracts with dental clinics and health centers to provide dental care.'

Further amend the bill by inserting at the end before the summary the following:

FISCAL NOTE

The Department of Human Services will incur some minor additional costs to improve access to dental care for children under the Medicaid program. These costs can be absorbed within the department's existing budgeted resources since the telephone referral service will be provided in conjunction with the department's Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment efforts.

The Governor's proposed 1998-1999 supplemental budget, LD 1950, includes \$2,605,030 and \$5,424,713 in fiscal years 1997-98 and 1998-99, respectively, for a fee increase for dentists. This level of funding is provided through General Fund appropriations and Federal Expenditure Fund allocations.'

SUMMARY

This amendment replaces the bill. It retains the provisions concerning a telephone referral service for Medicaid dental services for children and changes the report of the Department of Human Services from a one-time report to an annual report and action plan. It also adds a fiscal note.