

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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# 118th MAINE LEGISLATURE

## SECOND REGULAR SESSION-1998

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Legislative Document

No. 2137

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H.P. 1515

House of Representatives, January 20, 1998

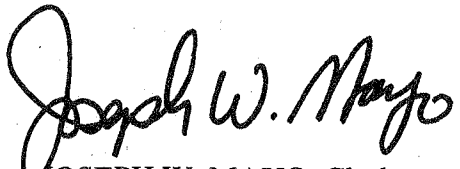
**An Act to Address the Crisis in Access to Dental Care for Low-income Children.**

(EMERGENCY)

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Approved for introduction by a majority of the Legislative Council pursuant to Joint Rule 203.

Reference to the Committee on Health and Human Services suggested and ordered printed.

  
JOSEPH W. MAYO, Clerk

Presented by Representative MITCHELL of Portland.

Cosponsored by Representatives: BRENNAN of Portland, COLWELL of Gardiner, MUSE of South Portland.

2           **Emergency preamble.** Whereas, Acts of the Legislature do not  
become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted  
as emergencies; and

4           Whereas, children in the State do not have access to dental  
6 services under the Medicaid program at locations close to their  
residences; and

8           Whereas, lack of these dental services causes a  
10 deterioration in the health of the children of the State; and

12           Whereas, in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts  
create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of  
14 Maine and require the following legislation as immediately  
necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and  
16 safety; now, therefore,

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

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

22 **§3174-R. Access to dental services for children under Medicaid**

24           **1. Referral system.** By July 1, 1998, the department shall  
establish a toll-free telephone referral system to assist  
26 children in obtaining dental services under Medicaid in a timely  
manner in the region of the State in which the children live.  
28 The department shall seek the cooperation of a statewide dental  
association and dentists in the State to ensure that an adequate  
number of providers are available through the referral system.

32           **2. Allowances for dental services.** If, by January 1, 1999,  
the referral system contains an insufficient number of dentists  
34 to provide timely service, the department shall take other steps  
to ensure adequate access to dental services for children,  
36 including, but not limited to, enhanced reimbursement for  
dentists under a disproportionate share formula and contracting  
38 with dental clinics or health centers to provide children's  
dental services. To fund services under this subsection, the  
40 department may use existing resources designated for Medicaid  
reimbursement for dental services and savings from improving the  
42 geographic availability of dental services.

44           **Emergency clause.** In view of the emergency cited in the  
preamble, this Act takes effect when approved.

## SUMMARY

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4       This bill requires the Department of Human Services to  
6       establish a toll-free telephone referral system for children's  
8       dental services under the Medicaid program. If an adequate  
      system is not in place by January 1, 1999, the department is  
      required to take additional steps, including, but not limited to,  
      enhanced reimbursement for dentists and contracting with dental  
      clinics or health centers.