

# LD 1501: An Act to Protect Oral Health for Children in Maine

Sponsor: Rep. Lori Gramlich

Voted unanimous OTP-A by HHS Committee 5/4/2021

**All Maine children deserve oral health care so they can stay healthy, be free from pain, and show up at school ready to learn.**

## **LD 1501 would:**

- Expand Maine's school-based oral health program so all K-12 schools can participate by 2025. Currently, only 1/3 of elementary schools participate due to eligibility and capacity limitations.
- Re-establish a full-time oral health coordinator position at the Maine CDC, which was eliminated 7 years ago, and would be the only position in state government specifically focused on oral health.
- Direct MaineCare to begin a value-based payment pilot for oral health services in school and pre-school settings and analyze how to maximize federal matching funds for these services, and
- Build into MaineCare's annual legislative report the status of school oral health services and methods to maximize paying for them with Medicaid funding.

**Dental pain is the most common chronic childhood disease and one of the top reasons children miss school, yet dental disease is largely preventable using cost-effective methods.**

## **This bill is a good investment because:**

- 43% of Maine children didn't have consistent dental insurance in 2019 and were less likely to receive any dental care as a result.<sup>1</sup>
- The lifetime cost of a cavity is enormous compared to preventive services.<sup>2</sup>
- Having a state oral health coordinator provides leadership on oral health issues and increases Maine's capacity to apply for available federal funding.
- Every \$1 state general fund dollar spent on children's dental services paid for by MaineCare brings in almost \$2.50 in federal match.<sup>3</sup>

**This is a winnable battle that improves our children's health and lifetime success in return for modest state investment.**



Partnership for  
Children's  
Oral Health

### Sources cited

- 1) <https://www.mainepecoh.org/publications/databrief.pdf>
- 2) <https://www.cdhp.org/resources/298-lifetime-costs-of-a-cavity-by-delta-dental>
- 3) <https://www.kff.org/medicaid/state-indicator/federal-matching-rate-and-multiplier>