

**LD 1399: An Act to Improve Oral Health & Access to
Dental Care Among Maine Children**

Sponsor: Rep. Lori Gramlich

***Too many children suffer from dental disease yet there are cost-effective methods
for preventing and treating the causes.***

We need to expand Maine's school oral health program.

LD 1399--An Act to Improve Oral Health & Access to Dental Care Among Maine Children--would fund a modest expansion in Maine's school-based oral health improvement efforts in order to ensure that core oral health prevention and early intervention services are available for all eligible elementary schools statewide.

**Why This Bill is Needed: All Maine Children Deserve Access to
Regular Preventive Oral Health Services**

- Dental disease is infectious and it is the most common chronic childhood disease yet it is both preventable and treatable.
- Poor oral health causes pain, impedes school readiness and attendance and later affects employment opportunities and financial stability.
- Maine's ability to address oral health has been weakened by reduced funding for public health and loss of staff positions in DHHS.
- Approximately 175 of Maine's 600+ schools are currently participating in Maine CDC's School Oral Health Program. 131 of these schools currently have at least 40% of their students eligible for free and reduced lunch. No new schools have been added to the program in many years due to reductions in funding and staffing for the program.

Let's Do Better:

We Can Provide Oral Health Services in our Schools Statewide

- There is good news! There are cost-effective evidence-based methods for preventing and treating dental disease in our children. **We must invest in making prevention universally available and make sure all children can access effective treatment.**
- It is essential that we expand Maine's School Oral Health Program to include as many schools as possible, broaden the services available to include preventive and early intervention services, and serve more students at participating schools.

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**This is a winnable battle with a significant impact on our children's
oral health in return for modest state investment**

What LD 1399 Will Bring to Maine Children and Families

- **State leadership** for integration of oral health within public health and health care systems ensuring that Mainers' oral health needs are addressed effectively and efficiently
- **Field Hygienist services to extend the School Oral Health Program** with a goal of ensuring that all children have the opportunity to access dental disease prevention, education, early intervention, disease management, and navigation support to help with follow-up appointments
- **A state oral health data plan** to enable data-driven planning, quality improvement and evaluation of outcomes and return on investment
- **State engagement in a strong public-private partnership** to strengthen the capacity of Maine's dental care and health care to meet the oral health needs of all Maine families
- **Maximize federal resources** to support oral health services for Maine children and families

LD 1399, An Act to Improve Oral Health & Access to Dental Care Among Maine Children, proposes to fund a modest expansion in Maine's school-based oral health improvement efforts in order to ensure that core oral health prevention and early intervention services are available statewide. This would cost approximately \$1.4M over two years.

Position Request Detail:

A. DHHS Staff positions: Total 3.5 FTE:

- 1 FTE Oral Health Coordinator, 1 FTE Data Coordinator, and .5 FTE Admin Support (Maine CDC Rural Health and Primary Care)
- 1 FTE Dental/EPSTD (Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment) Coordinator (MaineCare/OMS, federally-funded)

B. Contracts through Maine CDC Rural Health & Primary Care to deliver core preventive services in all schools and other community settings:

- Contracts for field hygienists to increase the number of schools served and make more oral health services available to more students (coordinated with district public health)
- Supervision and professional development for field hygienists
- Supplies for school-based oral health clinics

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Why is investing in the School Oral Health Program a smart move?

- Delivering school-based preventive services costs about \$28 per student per year (includes providing two applications of fluoride varnish, sealants as possible/appropriate, oral health screenings and referrals for follow-up care twice per year).
- With an allocation of \$500,000 LD 1399 would enable the School Oral Health Program to serve approximately 18,000 additional children.
- This expansion enables participation by 113 elementary schools statewide that have at least 40% of their students eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch and that are not currently able to participate in the School Oral Health Program due to insufficient funding and program staffing.
- These 113 schools are in 83 towns representing all 16 counties.

of Low-income Elementary Schools by current participation in the
School Oral Health Program (SOHP)*

County	Low-income* Elementary Schools Served by SOHP	Low-income Elementary Schools not served by SOHP	Current coverage of SOHP 2018-19
Androscoggin	4	13	24%
Aroostook	15	3	83%
Cumberland	7	11	39%
Franklin	3	6	33%
Hancock	5	10	33%
Kennebec	13	9	59%
Knox	7	1	88%
Lincoln	2	7	22%
Oxford	14	5	74%
Penobscot	11	15	42%
Piscataquis	3	2	60%
Sagadahoc	0	5	0%
Somerset	10	7	59%
Waldo	12	1	92%
Washington	25	3	89%
York	0	15	0%
Grand Total	131	113	54%

*Low-income schools defined as 40% of more of the student population eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch