

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Rules Committee
•
Finance Committee
•
Health & Social Services Committee
•
Legislative Council
•
Committee on Committees



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SENATE MAJORITY LEADER
JOHNNY ELLIS

SPONSOR STATEMENT – SENATE BILL 199

SB 199 – An Act relating to a two year funding cycle for medical assistance coverage for dentures.

SB 199 makes a simple change to the Adult Medicaid Dental program that would allow patients who are approved for dentures to receive both the uppers and lowers in a single fiscal year. The bill would let patients access two years of funding in a single year, thereby allowing them and their dentists to schedule treatment around the oral health of the patient, rather than the bureaucratic ease of the state fiscal year.

Current law places a limit on expenditures per eligible client at \$1,150 per year. This number was designed to pay for ½ of a set of dentures, either uppers or lowers, in a single fiscal year. When the program was created, the idea was that a client who needed dentures could receive one set on June 30th, and the second on July 1st. Unfortunately, this has proven to be impractical. Dentists who are forced to pull teeth can't always do so on the state's fiscal calendar, and Alaskans shouldn't suffer needlessly because their medical emergency occurred in the fall rather than the summer.

Adult Medicaid Dental has been recognized across the political spectrum as a successful government health care program. Over the past three years, the state has saved substantial amounts of money – and poorer Alaskans have been saved immense pain and hardship – by allowing Medicaid to pay for exams, cleanings, fillings, root canals, and dentures before painful and expensive surgery became necessary. SB 199 will fix a small flaw in the cost-containment portion of the program and help protect this important state investment.