

SB

199

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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



While in Session
State Capitol, Rm. 103
Juneau, AK 99801
(907) 465-3704
Fax: (907) 465-2529

While in Anchorage
716 W. 4th Ave
Anchorage, AK 99501
(907) 269-0169
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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.

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2010 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: 2
 Bill Version: SB 199
 (S) Publish Date: 1/27/10

Identifier (file name): SB199-DHSS-ADPMS-01-22-10 Dept. Affected: Health & Social Services
 Title: Medicaid Coverage for Dentures RDU: Health Care Services
 Component: Adult Preventive Dental
 Sponsor: Ellis
 Requester: Senate HSS Component Number: 2839

Expenditures/Revenue (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

	Appropriation Required	Information						
		FY 2011	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
OPERATING EXPENDITURE								
Personal Services								
Travel								
Contractual								
Supplies								
Equipment								
Land & Structures								
Grants & Claims	935.0		467.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Miscellaneous								
TOTAL OPERATING	935.0	0.0	467.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE								
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CHANGE IN REVENUES								
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FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts	626.5		266.5					
1003 GF Match	308.6		201.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
1004 GF								
1005 GF/Program Receipt								
1037 GF/Mental Health								
Other Interagency Receipt								
TOTAL	935.0	0.0	467.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Estimate of any current year (FY2010) c: _____

POSITIONS

Full-time								
Part-time								
Temporary								

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

This bill addresses limitations of coverage for upper and lower dentures within a given state fiscal year with the current \$1,150 annual limit. The annual limit provides for expenditures that would typically cover only an upper or lower denture, thus requiring Medicaid recipients to wait until the subsequent fiscal year to obtain the opposing denture under the Adult Preventive Dental (APD) program. The bill would authorize the department to allow for provision of both an upper and lower denture within the same state fiscal year, however when these services are provided the adult recipient would not be eligible for additional services under the APD program for a 2-year period.

In SFY 2009, the total cost of complete, partial and immediate denture claims was approximately \$1,620.0. (continued on page 2)

Prepared by: William J. Streur, Deputy Commissioner
 Division: Health Care Services

Phone: 269-7827
 Date/Time: 1/20/10 12:00 AM

Approved by: Alison Elgee, Assistant Commissioner
Finance & Management Services

Date: 1/22/2010

FISCAL NOTE # 2

STATE OF ALASKA
2010 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. SB199

ANALYSIS CONTINUATION

We estimate that the cost of denture services in the APD has grown at the same rate as all Health Care Services Medicaid Services costs (forecasted to be 6%) from FY 2009 to 2010. Medicaid growth for APD alone is forecasted to be 8.9% from FY 2010 to 2011 to reach a baseline cost of \$1,868.0 for denture services in FY 2011 with no changes to the program.

With the changes proposed in this bill and an expected effective date of July 1, 2010, we estimate the baseline costs noted above for denture services in FY 2011 will increase by 50%, assuming half of denture services recipients would be completing the denture process from FY2010 and the other half would be getting both their upper and lower dentures in FY 2011 for a total cost of \$2,803.0 (a difference of \$935.0 from baseline). We would still expect some increased costs over baseline in FY2012 as the number of people getting denture services has been growing each year as adults continue to learn about the APD program and this bill allows for them to be paid in one year. For FY2012, we estimate the need for increased funds to be half of the amount needed in FY 2011.

For subsequent years, we would expect the cost of denture services to level out to approximately what we would expect without the changes in this bill, the shift being not in cost but in how many recipients are receiving services.

For FY2011, we estimate 67% of APD services to be federally reimbursable, assuming ARRA FMAP increases are valid through all 4 quarters of FY 2011. For FY2012 we expect a FMAP of 50%. As some ADP services are IHS and reimbursed at 100%, we expect 57% of ADP costs to be federally reimbursable.

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2010 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: 3
Bill Version: SB 199
(S) Publish Date: 2/24/10

Identifier (file name): _____ Dept. Affected: Health and Social Serv.
Title Medicaid Coverage for Dentures RDU Health Care Services
Component Medical Assistance Administration
Sponsor Ellis
Requester Senate Finance Committee Component Number 242

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

	Appropriation Required	Information						
		FY 2011	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
OPERATING EXPENDITURES								
Personal Services								
Travel								
Contractual								
Supplies								
Equipment								
Land & Structures								
Grants & Claims								
Miscellaneous								
TOTAL OPERATING	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES								
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CHANGE IN REVENUES ()								
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FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts								
1003 GF Match								
1004 GF								
1005 GF/Program Receipts								
1037 GF/Mental Health								
Other Interagency Receipts								
TOTAL	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Estimate of any current year (FY2010) cost: _____

POSITIONS

Full-time								
Part-time								
Temporary								

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

Prepared by: Senate Finance Committee
Co-Chair Bert Stedman/Co-Chair Lyman Hoffman

Phone 465-3873/465-4453
Date/Time _____

Approved by: _____

Date 2/22/2010

SENIOR VOICE

Serving Older Alaskans and Their Families Since 1978

A publication of *Older Persons Action Group, Inc.* 325 E. Third Ave., Suite 300, Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Vol. 32 No. 11 November, 2009

Desperate senior prompts denture legislation

By SEN. JOHNNY ELLIS

Late last summer, an elderly man walked into my office and threatened to commit suicide. Needless to say, it was a very tense and upsetting situation for me and my staff. This gentleman had come from the Medicaid Adult Dental office, where he had been told that he had a choice – he could receive either the upper half or the lower half of the dentures that he needed, but not both, at least not in the same year. Of course, this set of options was really no choice at all, seeing as how he had no teeth at all. The state's wholly inadequate response to this constituent's unfortunate situation set my office in motion, and I am prepared to introduce legislation this session with bipartisan support that will provide a common-sense fix to an otherwise successful and needed program.

Medicaid Adult Dental was created three years ago. Until that time, Medicaid only covered emergency dental services for low income Alaskans. By expanding the program to cover preventative care – exams, cleanings, root canals, fillings and dentures – the state has saved millions of dollars and patients have avoided painful surgeries as the need for emergency care declines. In addition, good dental health

I have worked with the Dept. of Health and Social Services to allow patients who qualify for dentures under the Medicaid Adult Dental program to receive their full set of dentures in one sitting.

is closely linked with decreased risk for diabetes, heart disease, cancer and other serious diseases. Last year, the legislature unanimously made this successful program permanent.

The program limits the care that can be paid for in a single year, which is intended as a cost-control measure, an important feature in these uncertain budgetary times. Unfortunately, these measures go beyond cost control and have impacted the function of the program by limiting patients to half of a set of dentures per year. In public testimony on these limits, it was suggested that a patient could receive the upper dentures on June 30, the final day of the state fiscal year, and the lower dentures on July 1. I don't believe that we should be punishing citizens who happen to require dental care in the fall or winter, and I don't believe that dentists should be forced to schedule the care their patients need to make things more convenient for bureaucrats. This is the kind of frustrating flaw in our

system that drives people crazy and gives government a bad name.

That's why I have worked with the Department of Health and Social Services to develop a way to allow patients who qualify for dentures under the Medicaid Adult Dental program to receive their full set of dentures in one sitting, without destroying the cost-control mechanisms currently in place. The bill will be introduced when the legislature goes back into session in January, and I am pleased to have received bi-partisan support from my colleagues in the Senate.

In fact, as I have continued to work on this issue, I have heard more and more about how much sense this small change makes. A dentist in Juneau told me about the patients he sees from all around Southeast Alaska. The state pays for them to fly to Juneau, pays for their lodging, and pays for one half of their dentures. Then, a little while later, public money is spent to do it all over again for the other half. Allowing him and other

dentists to consolidate the care they are giving into one session will make the program a more efficient use of public money and improve the quality of care received by patients.

State government can be a large and unwieldy bureaucracy, and change is hard to do and often happens slowly. Most of the attention goes to the big issues that attract press coverage or help generate campaign slogans. But sometimes, there are issues that require us to place people over politics and give a direct benefit to the neighbors and constituents we are privileged to serve. It's too late for the gentleman who threatened to kill himself in my office – we worked with him to get his dentures through the existing two-year process – but it's not too late for others in his situation. This may be a small bill, and it won't change the world, but it will improve the lives of a few senior citizens in need – and that's a job I'm glad to do.

Senator Johnny Ellis represents downtown and midtown Anchorage in the Alaska State Senate and serves as the Majority Leader of the Senate Bi-Partisan Working Group.



Alaska Dental Society

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(907) 563-3003 • FAX: 563-3009
info@akdental.org

SB199/HB265 Medicaid Adult Dental Coverage

The Alaska Dental Society urges passage of SB199/HB265.

SB199 and its companion bill HB265 remedy an unintended consequence of the adult dental supplemental Medicaid coverage. Currently, under the maximum allowable benefit, a Medicaid recipient may receive either an upper or lower denture.

Unfortunately many Medicaid recipients need dentures for both the upper and lower jaws or dental arches. SB199/HB265 would allow a Medicaid recipient to combine two years worth of coverage so they could receive a full denture of both upper and lower dentures at the same time.

SB199/HB265 provides a benefit for everyone involved – the patient, the doctor and the Medicaid program:

- Medicaid recipients benefit from receiving both dentures at once, restoring their appearance, their ability to talk and chew, and most importantly their dignity.
- Providers benefit as they are no longer placed in the uncomfortable position of deciding which arch is in the worst condition. They can also work in a more efficient fashion constructing both sets of dentures simultaneously.
- The state benefits economically. The cost for both dentures, which would normally be borne over 2 years are now in one year but Medicaid recipients would still be limited to the same benefit total for 2 years. Denture patients frequently have to use travel benefits to reach a provider and for dentures this can be especially costly as dentures require multiple appointments. Providing both dentures at the same time would reduce the states travel expenses in half. Removing diseased and abscessed teeth would also save on costly ER and oral surgery visits.

L O G A N

D E N T A L

November 10, 2009

Senator Ellis
716 W. 4th Ave. Suite 500
Anchorage AK, 99501-2133

Dear Senator Ellis:

Thank you for sponsoring a bill to allow Medicaid recipients to use two consecutive years of supplemental benefits in the same year to receive upper and lower dentures at the same time. This will greatly help recipients as a single denture when you have no teeth to oppose it is of limited value. I believe it will ultimately lower costs for the Medicaid division, also, when travel benefits are factored in for this multi step procedure that must be repeated twice under the current system.

A case I did earlier this year may illustrate the problem providers' face. Due to HIPAA concerns I am not using names for this story.

I have a dental office in Juneau. Unfortunately, for a variety of reasons, dental offices in other Southeast communities do not usually accept new Medicaid patients. This patient had to travel over from Sitka and needed dentures, both upper and lower. He currently did not have either upper and lowers having lost both sets. The supplemental system for adult Medicaid benefits would cover a single denture, either the upper or lower. The patient, 78 years old and on fixed income, was unable to afford the second set even at reduced Medicaid fees. I wrote a letter Medicaid division, enclosed, outlining the problem and pointing out that travel costs associated with constructing the second set at a later date (when the new year's benefits kicked in) would ultimately cost more than the Medicaid fee for a denture. I received a reply from the division basically saying their hands were tied given the current statutes in place.

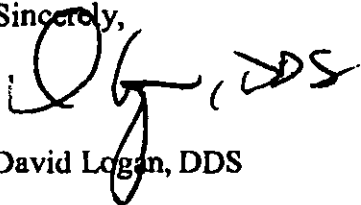
In the case of this patient I did a full set of dentures for the patient and absorbed the cost of construction of the second set. As I write this letter I saw two patients today in the same situation, one who lives here in Juneau that we are constructing an upper denture alone although he has no lower teeth. Currently are plan is construct the lowers after July

2237 N. Jordan Avenue, Juneau, AK 99801

Phone: (907) 780-6066 Fax: (907) 780-4274 info@juneausmiles.com

1, 2010. The second patient traveled here from Angoon and lost both his upper and lower dentures 2 weeks ago. His treatment will be further complicated as his old set was apparently ill fitting and led to a large tissue mass on the lower that will have to be removed prior to denture construction.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "DLG, DDS". The signature is stylized and written over the printed name below.

David Logan, DDS

2237 N. Jordan Avenue, Juneau, AK 99801

Phone: (907) 780-6066 Fax: (907) 780-4274 info@juneausmiles.com

L O G A N
D E N T A L

December 17, 2008

ACS
Preauthorizations
POB 240808
Anchorage, AK 99524-0808

Re: [REDACTED]
Medicaid #: [REDACTED]

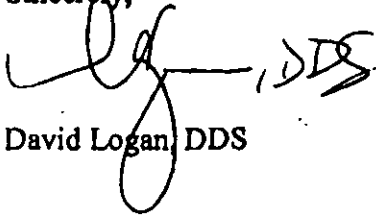
Dear Sirs:

Mr. [REDACTED] is currently edentulous (without teeth) upper and lower. We have previously preauthorized Mr. [REDACTED] for a lower denture (preauth [REDACTED]) - working with a Sitka Clinic we had not previously seen Mr. [REDACTED].

Mr. [REDACTED] has been without teeth for 6 years. One denture, the maximum allowed under the MEDS system, will provide little improvement for him. Mr. [REDACTED] will be traveling to our office from Sitka for completion of the denture. The travel costs will ultimately cost more than the fee for the denture given the number of appointments required to properly construct a denture.

I am requesting preauthorization for upper and lower dentures (included) for Mr. [REDACTED]. This is a case where everyone will benefit: the state will have less overall costs than a second round of travel costs to construct the other denture after July 1, Mr. [REDACTED] will have opposing dentures to eat with, and my overall costs will be less than repeating the same appointments come July 1.

Sincerely,


David Logan, DDS

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ALASKA

PRIMARY CARE ASSOCIATION

The Honorable Senator Ellis
Alaska State Senate
State Capitol, Room 103
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Re: Support for Medicaid Coverage for Dentures – SB 199

January 22, 2010

Dear Senator Ellis,

The Alaska Primary Care Association (APCA) represents 26 health care organizations and 142 non-profit Community Health Centers (CHCs), as well as other safety net providers throughout Alaska. In 2009, our sites provided primary healthcare to over 81,000 Alaskans from across the state. According to the Alaska Community Health Center Uniform Data System, Alaska's CHC provided dental services to 16,244 Alaskans and totaled 39,016 dental encounters in 2007.

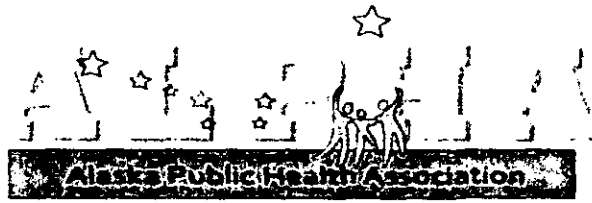
The APCA supports providing a two-year funding cycle for Medicaid assistance coverage for dentures. The APCA knows that access to dental services improves health outcomes and reduces overall health care costs. Oral health is critical for overall health and adults in the Medicaid program receiving access to dental services reduces the likelihood that they will develop more expensive and acute dental problems.

We appreciate your hard work and service to Alaskans and support your efforts to expand access to health care for all Alaskans.

Respectfully,

Regan Mattingly
State Affairs Coordinator

Shelley S. Hughes
Government Affairs Director



November 6, 2009

Senator Johnny Ellis
Senate Majority Leader
Alaska State Legislature
716 W. 4th Ave
Anchorage, AK 99501
Fax: (907) 269-017

Dear Senator Ellis;

I am writing on behalf of the Alaska Public Health Association (ALPHA) to extend our support for and thank you for introducing a Bill that will allow Alaska's adult Medicaid recipients to receive a set of dentures within one fiscal year. This Act will meet the needs of patients and dental providers by providing two-years worth of dental benefits for dentures in a single year.

The ALPHA represents over 150 health professionals in Alaska; the primary mission of ALPHA is the enhancement of the public's health. In fulfilling our mission, we support systems that support patient-oriented health service delivery. ALPHA believes that the "Act providing for a two-year funding cycle for medical assistance coverage for dentures" establishes a system enabling patients to receive patient-oriented care.

Thank you for consulting ALPHA in developing this Bill. Please feel free to contact me if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

Karol Fink, MS, RD
ALPHA Health Policy Chair
Karolfink@yahoo.com
907.227.8178

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPT. OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES

Alaska Commission on Aging

SEAN PARNELL, GOVERNOR

P.O. BOX 110693
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811-0693
PHONE: (907) 465-3250
FAX: (907) 465-1398

January 23, 2010

Senator Johnny Ellis
Senate Health and Social Services Committee
Alaska State Capitol, Room 103
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Subject: Support Letter for SB 199

Dear Senator Ellis:

The Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) is pleased to offer support for SB 199, a bill to provide access to Medicaid patients who are approved for dentures using a two-year funding cycle for medical assistance benefits to cover the costs for complete and partial dentures in a single fiscal year. This legislation is authored by you and co-sponsored by Senators Bettye Davis, Dennis Egan, Hollis French, Linda Menard, Donald Olson, Joe Paskvan, Joe Thomas, and Bill Wielechowski.

The Commission believes SB 199 provides a common sense solution that allows patients and their dentists the flexibility to schedule treatment around the oral health needs of the patient, which will improve the quality of care for older Alaskans and other qualifying recipients. Moreover, this legislation enhances the cost-effectiveness of the current Medicaid Adult Dental program by reducing the number of oral surgery visits, medical procedures, and related travel costs required for individuals who need a complete set of dentures but are limited to half of a set of dentures per fiscal year under the existing program. Anecdotally, we have learned that some individuals may even refuse partial extractions in one arch knowing that they could be without teeth for a prolonged period waiting for Medicaid to cover the cost of the other complete denture in the next fiscal year.

Good nutrition is vital for health and wellness across the life span and depends on oral health. Dental pain and missing or decaying teeth can affect dietary choices for seniors that may impact overall health and wellness. Vulnerable older Alaskans are at risk of developing dental infections that have been associated with periodontal disease, diabetes, pneumonia, and other chronic diseases including cardiovascular disease. Restorative dental care can help to prevent the progression of serious dental disease and discomfort which can result in more costly emergency care.

Older Alaskans utilize the Medicaid Adult Dental program. According to data based on Medicaid claims information for persons age 60 years and older for the period April 1, 2007 thru December 31, 2009, there were a total of 3,104 (unduplicated) seniors served by the Medicaid Adult Dental Program. The average cost for partial dentures for seniors ranges between \$1,085 (for a complete maxillary denture) to \$1,125 (for a complete mandibular denture). The approximate cost for a complete set of dentures is \$2,225. The current program cap is \$1,150 per year.

As we move forward, the Commission respectfully asks for your consideration of our recommendations below to enhance SB 199 and the Adult Dental Medicaid program for qualifying older Alaskans and other Medicaid recipients:

- Allow eligible patients access to two years of total funding as determined by the cost cap of the Medicaid Adult Dental program to permit individuals receiving partial dentures through the program the ability to access remaining benefits under the cost cap should they need additional denture services during the two-year period.
- Pending approval of SB 199, begin work with the Department of Health and Social Services to expand the two-year access of services to phase in other preventative and restorative services allowed under the Medicaid Adult Dental program in FY 2012.
- Adjust the annual cost cap for dental services (currently in statute for the last three years) to address the rising costs of dental care and encourage more participation of Medicaid dental providers.

Please accept our sincere appreciation for your efforts to improve the Medicaid Adult Dental program by allowing patients who qualify for dentures under the program to receive their full set of dentures according to a treatment schedule determined by the patient with their dentist. We believe that SB 199 will help to improve health and wellness for many older Alaskans who need dentures and we support passage of this legislation. Please feel free to contact Denise Daniello, ACoA's executive director, by phone (465-4879) or email (denise.daniello@alaska.gov) should you have questions or require additional information. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Sharon Howerton-Clark
Chair, Alaska Commission on Aging

Sincerely,



Denise Daniello
ACoA Executive Director

Cc: Senator Bettye Davis
Senator Dennis Egan
Senator Hollis French
Senator Linda Menard

Senator Donald Olson
Senator Joe Paskvan
Senator Joe Thomas
Senator Bill Wielechowski

The TRUST

The Alaska Mental Health
Trust Authority

Alaskan Seniors
Living Longer Growing Stronger
from the Alaska Commission on Aging



**Governor's Council on Disabilities
and Special Education**

**Advisory Board on Alcoholism
and Drug Abuse**



Alaska Mental Health Board

Adjust Cap on Adult Dental Services Reimbursed by Medicaid

The Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education, Alaska Mental Health Board, Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, and Alaska Commission on Aging, in collaboration with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority and the Alaska Brain Injury Network, jointly support the developing a solution that will allow for the adjustment of the current cap on adult dental services reimbursed by Medicaid.

- Currently, the annual cap for dental services – such as cleanings, exams, crowns, root canals and dentures – is \$1,150 per individual. With the rising cost of dental care, this cap is proving not adequate yet the cap is set in statute and has not been increased in over three years.
- The American Dental Association recommends adult preventive and restorative dental services be included in all state Medicaid programs, and as former U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop stated, "You're not healthy without good oral health."
- Trust beneficiaries continue to list dental services as a priority unmet health needs.
- The challenge this session is to find a current bill or to introduce a new bill that will create a method for adjusting the adult dental Medicaid cap on a regular basis or will at least increase the cap to cover the increase the cost of living increases over a 4 or five year period.

Therefore, we support a legislative solution that will allow for the adjustment of the current cap on adult dental services reimbursed by Medicaid.



3745 Community Park Loop, Ste. 140
Anchorage, Alaska 99508
office: (907) 274-2824 fax: (907) 274-2826
www.alaskabraininjury.net

February 2, 2010

Senator Johnny Ellis
Alaska State Capitol, Room 103
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

RE: Support Letter for SB 199

Dear Senator Ellis,

Alaska Brain Injury Network appreciates your leadership in sponsoring SB 199 to provide vulnerable Alaskans who are approved for dentures to use a two-year funding cycle for medical assistance benefits to cover the costs for complete and partial dentures in a single fiscal year. This is a common sense solution for all involved: Medicaid dental patients, dentists, and the state paying for the service.

Alaska has made strides since 2006 in providing Medicaid adult dental services and we appreciate your continued efforts to improve the needed dental benefits for our focus population of adults with traumatic brain injuries and acquired brain injuries. Preventative care we have in place lessens the need for painful surgery, emergency care, and also lowers the risk of dental infections effecting overall health.

Cost control measures are important to consider in good fiscal management. However, there are factors we ask you to please consider to better SB 199 and the Adult Dental Medicaid program as recommended by the Alaska Commission on Aging:

- Allow eligible patients access to two years of total funding as determined by the cost cap of the Medicaid Adult Dental program to permit individuals receiving partial dentures through the program the ability to access remaining benefits under the cost cap should they need additional denture services during the two-year period.
- Pending approval of SB 199, begin work with the Department of Health and Social Services to expand the two-year access of services to phase in other preventative and restorative services allowed under the Medicaid Adult Dental program in FY 2012.
- Adjust the annual cost cap for dental services (currently in stature for the last three years) to address the rising costs of dental care and encourage more participation of Medicaid dental providers.

We appreciate your continued efforts to improve the Medicaid Adult Dental Program and support the passage of SB 199. Thank you for your dedication.

Sincerely,

Jill Hodges, Executive Director

Alaska Brain Injury Network, Inc. mission is to educate, plan, coordinate, and advocate for a comprehensive service delivery system for the survivors for traumatic brain injury and their families.



Mailing Address
P.O. Box 201849
Anchorage, AK 99520

Fairview Center
1217 E. 10th Avenue
(907) 257-4686 appointments
(907) 257-4644 fax

Fairview Dental Clinic
1217 E. 10th Avenue
(907) 257-4661 appointments
(907) 257-4694 fax

Administrative Office
903 W. Northern Lights, #218
(907) 792-8500 billing
(907) 792-6538 phone
(907) 792-6526 fax

www.anhc.org

February 9, 2010

Senator Johnny Ellis
Majority Leader
Alaska Senate
716 W 4th Avenue
Anchorage, AK 99501

Subject: Support Letter for SB 199

Dear Senator Ellis:

The Anchorage Neighborhood Health Centers Dental Department is pleased to offer support for SB 199, a bill to provide eligible Medicaid adult recipients the opportunity to access a two-year funding cycle to cover the cost of a complete set of dentures or partial dentures in a single fiscal benefit year.

Attempting to provide a patient with one half of a needed set of dentures at the end of a fiscal benefit year and the second half at the beginning of the next fiscal year creates difficulty in providing quality care. Moreover it frustrates the patient and overloads the provider and the lab rendering it nearly impossible to meet the demand and is clearly a less than optimal way of providing an individual with dentures.

Passing SB 199 will allow eligible Medicaid adult recipients to receive a full set of dentures or partial dentures at the same time. It will allow providers to make and deliver a complete set of dentures/partial dentures anytime throughout the fiscal year. This will create better flow for both the provider and the labs and allow for improved quality of care to the patients.

Thank you for your efforts to improve the Adult Medicaid Dental program.

Sincerely,

Pamela Hawk, Dental Operations Manager
Anchorage Neighborhood Health Center
1217 E 10th Avenue, Anchorage, AK 99501
907-257-4662 (voice) 907-257-4694 (fax)



Promoting wellness by providing the highest quality care with compassion and accessible care.



AARP Alaska
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Suite 1420
Anchorage, AK 99503

T 1-866-227-7447
F 907-341-2270
TTY 1-877-434-7598
www.aarp.org/ak

February 10, 2010

The Honorable Lyman Hoffman, Co-Chair
Senate Finance Committee
Alaska State Capitol, Room 518
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

The Honorable Bert Stedman, Co-Chair
Senate Finance Committee
Alaska State Capitol, Room 516
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

RE: SB 199 (Ellis)--Support

Dear Co-Chairs Hoffman and Stedman:

On behalf of the members of AARP in Alaska, we would like to urge your support for SB 199 to establish a two year funding cycle for the adult dental benefit in Medicaid. The bill is sponsored by your Committee colleague, Senator Johnny Ellis, and co-sponsored by twelve other Senators including your Committee members Senators Egan, Thomas, Olson and Huggins as well as Senators Davis, French, Menard, Paskvan, Wielechowski, Kookesh, Wagoner and McGuire.

SB 199 basically changes the benefit for dentures so that an adult Medicaid beneficiary would be able to use the funds available for two years to pay for dentures. This makes sense for both the client and the provider.

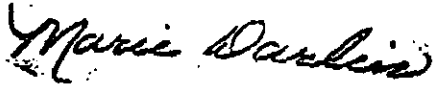
Older persons in need of dentures often have accompanying nutrition problems. These nutrition problems can cause other health issues and create an overall deterioration in health status. For those who need them, dentures are essential to quality health care. Two-year funding for dentures should be considered sensible prevention with the long term possibility of saving Medicaid funds that would not need to be spent on more serious health care problems resulting from poor oral health status.

AARP recommends an "AYE" vote on SB 199.

Should you have any questions about our position, please feel free to contact me (586-3637) or Patrick Luby, AARP Advocacy Director (907-762-3314).

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Marie Darlin, Coordinator
AARP Capital City Task Force
415 Willoughby Avenue, Apt. 506
Juneau, AK 99801
586-3637 (voice)
463-3580 (fax)

CC: Senator Joe Thomas
Senator Charlie Huggins
Senator Dennis Egan
Senator Donald Olson
Senator Johnny Ellis



Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak

Federally Recognized December, 2000

Ceremonial Bent Wood Hat

February 8, 2010

Senator Johnny Ellis
Senate Health and Social Service committee
Alaska State Capitol, Rm 102
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Senator Ellis:

Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak is in full support of SB 199, a bill to provide access to Medicaid patients who are approved for dentures using a 'two-year' funding cycle for medical assistance benefits to cover the costs for complete and partial dentures in a single fiscal year. We believe the bill would be beneficial to the elders among our 1,500 tribal citizens by allowing patients and their dentists the flexibility to schedule treatment around the oral health needs of the patient, while also enhancing the cost-effectiveness of the current Medicate Adult Dental Program by reducing the number of oral surgery visits, medical procedures, and related travel costs.

In addition, we also support the recommendations of the Alaska Commission on Aging, which we believe enhance S.B. 199. Those recommendations include allowing eligible patients access to two years of total funding and the ability to adjust the annual cost cap for dental services to address the rising costs of dental care and encourage more participation of Medicaid dental providers.

We believe that SB 199 will help improve health and wellness for many older Alaskans who need dentures and we whole heartedly support this legislation. We appreciate your efforts and SB 199's co sponsors to improve the Medicaid Adult Dental program.

Sincerely,

Brenda Schwantes
Chairwoman
Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak

Cc: Senator Bettye Davis Senator Donald Olson
Senator Dennis Egan Senator Joe Paskvan
Senator Hollis French Senator Joe Thomas
Senator Linda Menard Senator Bill Wielechowskie

312 W. Marine Way, Kodiak, Alaska 99615 (907) 486-4449

Fax: (907) 486-3361 * E-mail:

Proudly representing the members of the Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak Island, Alaska

MABEL T. CAVERLY**Senior Center**325 E. Third Avenue
Anchorage, AK 99501

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10 February 2010

The Honorable Senator Johnny Ellis
Alaska State Senate
State Capitol, Room 103
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Re: Support for Medicaid Coverage for Dentures-SB199

Dear Senator Ellis:

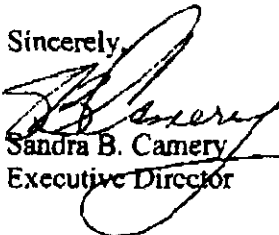
The Mabel T. Caverly Senior (Services) Center has worked with many individuals, ages 55 and over, who needed dental work. For those fortunate seniors who qualify for Medicaid, the additional of dental services to Medicaid was a life saver. Unfortunately, it has been a hardship for seniors and their dentists to schedule one denture in June and one the following month in July. A 2 year cycle for Medicaid dentures would alleviate this problem.

Oral health is now linked to physical health—particularly heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis, and dementia. These conditions are prevalent in the senior population. A simple administrative change in the way dentures are funded would not only alleviate suffering, it would ultimately reduce Medicaid costs.

For seniors who don't qualify for Medicaid, but aren't able to afford dental work, this agency has had in place for over 10 years a program to issue income qualifying seniors \$900.00 grants for their dental work. This program has been funded by corporate donors, the Municipality of Anchorage, and, until 2008, by the Human Services Matching grant. If the HSMG is re-authorized, we hope our program will once again be chosen for funding by the local review panel. This program alleviates a great deal of suffering and ultimately reduces costs, too.

Thank-you for all your support for senior citizens. We appreciate your understanding and compassion.

Sincerely,


Sandra B. Camery
Executive Director

A Friendly Place Providing Stepping Stones Over Deep Water



April 14, 2010

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To: Members of the Alaska House of Representatives

RE: SB 199 (Ellis)--Support

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SB 199 basically changes the benefit for dentures so that an adult Medicaid beneficiary would be able to use the funds available for two years to pay for dentures. This makes sense for both the client and the provider.

Older persons in need of dentures often have accompanying nutrition problems. These nutrition problems can cause other health issues and create an overall deterioration in health status. For those who need them, dentures are essential to quality health care. Two-year funding for dentures should be considered sensible prevention with the long term possibility of saving Medicaid funds that would not need to be spent on more serious health care problems resulting from poor oral health status.

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