

SB

199

<target><bill>SB 199</bill><subject>SB
199</subject><comm>SFIN26</comm></target>

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.

SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

DATE: 1/27/10

FURTHER:

DATE TURNED
IN TO OFFICE: 2/23/10

Finance Committee considered SENATE BILL NO. 199

SB 199 MEDICAID COVERAGE FOR DENTURES

"An Act providing for a two-year funding cycle for medical assistance coverage for dentures."

and recommends:

be replaced with SCS or CS _____ ()

adopt previous SCS or CS _____ ()

attached amendment(s)

adopt _____ Letter of Intent

further referral to _____ Committee

SENATE BILL:

- Same Title
- New Title

HOUSE BILL:

- Same Title
- Technical Title Change
- New Title w/ SCR # _____


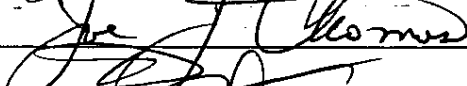
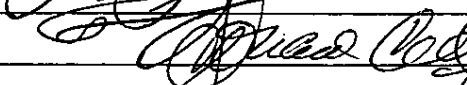
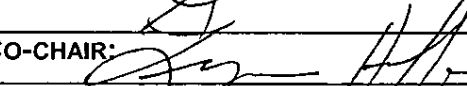


NEW FISCAL NOTE(S):

Department	Date	Fiscal	Indet.	Zero	FN#
S.FIN	2/22			✓	3

PREVIOUS FISCAL NOTE(S):

Department	Date	Fiscal	Indet.	Zero	FN#
DHS	1/20	✓			2

APPROPRIATION - no fiscal note

SIGNATURES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:	PRINTED LAST NAME	DO PASS	DO NOT PASS	NO REC	AMEND
	Huggins	✓			
	Thomas	✓			
	Egan	✓			
	Olsen			✓	
CO-CHAIR: 	Hoffman	✓			
CO-CHAIR: 	SPELMAN			✓	

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2010 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: _____
 Bill Version: SB 199
 () Publish Date: _____

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

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

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
 Approved by: _____

Phone 465-3873/465-4453
 Date/Time _____
 Date 2/22/2010

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

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE								
----------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

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 Receipts								
1037 GF/Mental Health								
Other interagency Receipts								
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 nece:

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.



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February 10, 2010

RECEIVED

FEB 10 2010

The Honorable Lyman Hoffinan, 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.

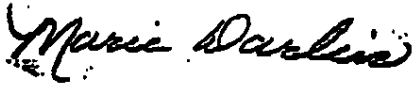
Older persons in need of dentures often have accompanying nutrition problems. These nutrition problems can cause other health issues and create an overall deterioration in health status. For those who need them, dentures are essential to quality health care. Two-year funding for dentures should be considered 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

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



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 likeliness 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

Alaska Primary Care Association
903 W Northern Lights Blvd, Suite 200
Anchorage, AK 99503

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fx. 907-929-2734
www.alaskapca.org

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.



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November 19, 2009

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

Dear Majority Leader Ellis:

On behalf of the 97,000 members of AARP in Alaska, we would like to pledge our support for your bill to establish a two year funding cycle for the adult dental benefit in Medicaid.

We understand you are particularly interested in changing 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.

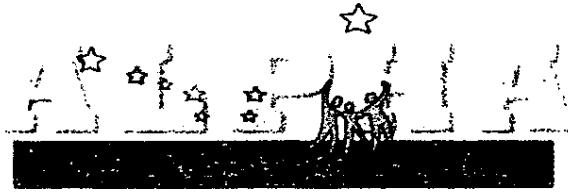
Older persons in need of dentures often have accompanying nutrition problems. These nutrition problems can cause other health issues and create an overall deterioration in health status. For those who need them, dentures are essential to quality health care. Two-year funding for dentures should be considered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

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)



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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karol Fink". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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

www.alaskapublichealth.org

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]

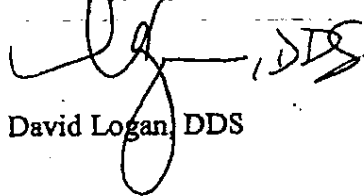
Dear Sirs:

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

2237 N. Jordan Avenue, Juneau, AK 99801

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

www.juneausmiles.com

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.

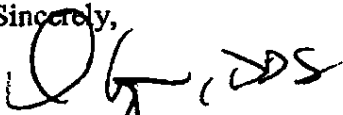
In the case of this patient I did a full set of dentures for the patient and absorbed the cost of construction of the second set. As I write this letter I saw two patients today in the same situation, one who lives here in Juneau that we are constructing an upper denture alone although he has no lower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

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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 "DL, DDS". The signature is stylized and written over the word "Sincerely,".

David Logan, DDS

2237 N. Jordan Avenue, Juneau, AK 99801

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Sen. Bettye Davis

From: Steven Bliss [sbliss@alaska.com]
Sent: Saturday, January 23, 2010 7:49 PM
To: Sen. Bettye Davis
Subject: Support for SB199 Medicaid Adult Dental Coverage

Senator Davis

I would like to add my support for the following endorsement from the Alaska Dental Society. We as dental providers really do want to minimize costs to the State and inconvenience for the poor recipients of the needed dental procedures. It would seem to me that there is hardly a downside in paying the same amount of money averaged over two years.

I urge you to support SB-199.

SB199 will remedy an unintended outcome of the adult dental supplemental Medicaid, which hinders patients from receiving care in a timely fashion.

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 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 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.

Thank you for voting for SB199.

Sincerely,

Steven D. Bliss
502 E Fireweed Ln
Anchorage, AK 99503

RECEIVED
JAN 25 2010

This is a form letter. 15 additional copies were received.

Sen. Bettye Davis

From: Ryle Radke III [rradke@mosquionet.com]
Sent: Thursday, January 21, 2010 5:47 PM
To: Sen. Bettye Davis
Subject: Support for SB199 Medicaid Adult Dental Coverage

Senator Davis

I urge you to support SB-199.

I served almost 10 years at the Salvation Army Dental Access Program before it closed in 2007. One of the most satisfying services that I provided was providing upper and lower dentures to patients that had lost all their teeth. Many patients testified about the change, that having a complete set of teeth, made in how other people related to them, and the improved opportunities for gaining employment.

As a practicing dentist I can also testify on the vastly improved outcome of a denture case if the two sets (upper and lower) are fitted simultaneously as opposed to making one and then later trying to fit the other one to the existing. Fit, form, and function will be much better if dentures are made as a set.

I urge you to vote for SB-199

Sincerely,

Ryle A Radke III, DDS
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SENIOR VOICE

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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

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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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.