

March 14, 2023

The Honorable Robert Bierman, Representative
579 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Liz Boldon, Senator
95 University Ave. W.
Minnesota Senate Bldg. #3201
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Representative Bierman and Senator Boldon:

We write in support of your proposal to reinstate certain adult dental benefits under the Medical Assistance program in Minnesota (HF898/SF782).

Founded in 1969, Delta Dental of Minnesota is a non-profit health service plan corporation administering dental benefits to over 2.5 million Minnesotans. Our company operates with a mission to promote healthier lives, and a vision to partner to advance health and community well-being by improving access, quality and innovation.

Access to appropriate oral health care is important to the overall health and wellbeing of Minnesotans. Optimal oral health starting in childhood and continuing in adulthood has been associated with decreased risk of cardiovascular disease, stroke, and other negative health outcomes. In 2008, adult comprehensive dental benefits were cut as a result of the budget deficit the state was facing. Currently, adult dental utilization rates under the Medical Assistance program are significantly lower than utilization rates for children and pregnant adults.

We support this bipartisan effort to re-instate adult dental benefits and improve access to care. In concert with these efforts, we would add that it will be critical for the state to make the appropriate investments in the administration of the public programs to ensure that there are a sufficient number of providers to administer these benefits, and that the programs are sustainable going forward. Unfortunately, Minnesota is experiencing a shortage of dental providers, as well as provider hesitancy to fully participate in the public programs as currently implemented (see 2022 Department of Human Services report *Analysis of State Medicaid Dental Programs and Dental Provider Hesitancy*).

HF898/SF782 is a step in the right direction to ensure adult enrollees have coverage for the appropriate care. We look forward to further conversations with you on the interdependency of access and availability of services in our state and how we can work to solve these challenges together.

Thank you for your leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,



Tamera Robinson
President Insurance Division

cc: Commissioner Harpstead, Department of Human Services

Corporate Address

500 Washington Avenue South
Suite 2060
Minneapolis, MN 55415-1163

Telephone: 612-224-3300
Toll Free: 1-877-268-3384
DeltaDentalMN.org

Mailing Address

PO Box 9304
Minneapolis, MN 55440-9304



Delta Dental of Minnesota

Senators Utke, Morrison, Wiklund, Mann, Abeler, Hoffman, Kupec and Lieske
Representatives Reyer, Kiel, Schomaker, Liebling, Pursell, Backer, Acomb, Carroll, Elkins,
Hemmingsen-Jaeger, Her, Murphy, Nadeau, Neu Brindley, Perryman, Quam, Smith and Olson

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