



## An Act to Restore MassHealth Adult Dental Benefits SB 1079 / HB 1529

Lead Sponsors: Senator Harriette Chandler and Representative John Scibak

### Proposal

To restore the full range of services to MassHealth adult dental coverage in order to protect the overall health of more than 700,000 individuals in Massachusetts.

### Background

In the FY11 budget a number of essential health care services were cut from MassHealth adult dental coverage.

Cuts to MassHealth adult dental benefits have resulted in a significant decrease in access to effective oral health care for hundreds of thousands of individuals with chronic diseases and health risks.

The cuts are forcing many to use costly emergency and inpatient hospital settings to seek temporary relief of pain caused by lack of access to restorative care.

The cuts don't just hurt adults: Families seek health and oral health care as a family unit. A growing body of research confirms that expanding insurance coverage to parents leads to greater participation among children.

#### Did you know...

- Of the 700,000 Massachusetts residents receiving MassHealth who are affected by these cuts, more than 120,000 are low-income seniors and 180,000 are disabled individuals.
- Dental disease is linked to heart disease, stroke, and diabetes.
- More than 51 million school hours and 164 million work hours are lost each year due to dental disease.

### Specifics

Dental cleanings and extractions alone are not adequate care. Dental decay is a bacterial infection and the only way that you can stop this infection from spreading and affecting health is with comprehensive care. Left untreated, dental decay causes pain and suffering to thousands of adults, negatively impacts the health and well being of children and families, and has a significant impact on our workforce and business community.

If enacted, this legislation would restore the benefits cut from MassHealth adult dental in the FY11 budget.

For more information on **An Act to Restore MassHealth Adult Dental Benefits** please contact Tim Daley in Senator Chandler's office at (617) 722-1544 or Annie Martin-McDonough in Representative Scibak's office at (617) 722-2240.