

STATE OF MAINE

—
IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-FIVE

—
H.P. 1069 - L.D. 1615

Resolve, to Expand Access to Oral Health Care by Studying Alternative Pathways for Obtaining a License to Practice Dentistry

Emergency preamble. Whereas, acts and resolves of the Legislature do not become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

Whereas, this resolve establishes a commission to study alternative pathways for obtaining a license to practice dentistry; and

Whereas, it is important to conduct this evaluation to address workforce shortages that impact the availability of oral health care services to Maine residents; and

Whereas, this legislation must take effect as soon as possible in order to provide adequate time for the commission to complete its work in a timely manner before submitting its report; and

Whereas, in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, therefore, be it

Sec. 1. Commission to Expand Access to Oral Health Care by Studying Alternative Pathways for Obtaining a License to Practice Dentistry established. Resolved: That the Commission to Expand Access to Oral Health Care by Studying Alternative Pathways for Obtaining a License to Practice Dentistry, referred to in this resolve as "the commission," is established.

Sec. 2. Commission membership. Resolved: That, notwithstanding Joint Rule 353, the commission consists of 11 members appointed as follows:

1. Two members of the Senate, appointed by the President of the Senate, at least one of whom must be a member of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services;
2. Two members of the House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, at least one of whom must be a member of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services;

3. One member who is a member of the Board of Dental Practice, appointed by the Board of Dental Practice;

4. One member who is a representative of the Maine Dental Association, appointed by the President of the Senate;

5. One member who is a representative of federally qualified health centers that provide dental services, appointed by the President of the Senate;

6. One member who is a dentist licensed to practice in the State, appointed by the President of the Senate;

7. One member who is a foreign-trained dentist, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;

8. One member who is a representative of the Maine Dental Hygienists' Association, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives; and

9. One member representing the Department of Professional and Financial Regulation, Office of Professional and Occupational Regulation, appointed by the Governor.

Sec. 3. Chairs. Resolved: That the first-named Senate member is the Senate chair and the first-named House of Representatives member is the House chair of the commission.

Sec. 4. Appointments; convening of commission. Resolved: That all appointments must be made no later than 30 days following the effective date of this resolve. The appointing authorities shall notify the Executive Director of the Legislative Council once all appointments have been completed. After appointment of all members, the chairs shall call and convene the first meeting of the commission. If 30 days or more after the effective date of this resolve a majority of but not all appointments have been made, the chairs may request authority and the Legislative Council may grant authority for the commission to meet and conduct its business.

Sec. 5. Duties. Resolved: That the commission shall study integrating foreign-trained dentists and out-of-state dentists into the dental care workforce in a way that best reflects their level of skills and training and reducing barriers to licensing for foreign-trained dentists and dentists from other states. The commission shall explore a wide range of options for how to help enable foreign-trained dentists and out-of-state dentists who wish to live and practice in the State to address potential workforce shortages. The commission shall make recommendations on:

1. Strategies to integrate foreign-trained dentists and dentists from other states into the State's dental care workforce;

2. Changes to state laws and rules that may pose unnecessary barriers to practice for foreign-trained dentists and dentists from other states;

3. Necessary supports for foreign-trained dentists and out-of-state dentists moving through the different steps in the licensing process prior to involvement with the Board of Dental Practice;

4. Opportunities to advocate for corresponding changes to national licensing requirements; and

5. Any other matters pertaining to foreign-trained dentists and dentists from other states considered necessary by the commission.

The commission shall review and identify best practices from similar efforts in other states. The commission may hold hearings and invite testimony from experts and the public to gather information. The commission may develop guidelines for full licensure and conditional licensure of foreign-trained dentists and dentists from other states and recommendations for the types of strategies, programs and support that would benefit foreign-trained dentists and dentists from other states to use the fullest extent of their training and experience.

Sec. 6. Staff assistance. Resolved: That the Legislative Council shall provide necessary staffing services to the commission, except that Legislative Council staff support is not authorized when the Legislature is in regular or special session.

Sec. 7. Stakeholder participation. Resolved: That the commission may invite the participation of stakeholders to participate in meetings or subcommittee meetings of the commission to ensure the commission has the information and expertise necessary to fulfill its duties, including, but not limited to, representatives of the University of New England College of Dental Medicine and the Maine Public Health Association.

Sec. 8. Report. Resolved: That, notwithstanding Joint Rule 353, no later than December 10, 2025, the commission shall submit a report that includes its findings and recommendations, including suggested legislation, to the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services. The joint standing committee may report out legislation to the Second Regular Session of the 132nd Legislature based on the report.

Emergency clause. In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation takes effect when approved.