

To Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and members of the committee on Health and Human Services:

I am testifying today in support of LD 1837: An Act to Increase Oral Health Services. My name is Steve Mills and I am a pediatric dentist from Scarborough, although I have professional connections in Portland, Waterville, and Augusta as well. It is with a great deal of appreciation for what you all have done in the recent past to support the School Oral Health Program that brings me here again.

Today I would like to highlight aspects of the bill that are particularly important. They have to do with making two temporary positions permanent to help make the School Oral Health Program a success and ensuring that school services are financially sustainable in the long term.

The first is the creation of a temporary oral health position at Maine's CDC for an individual to be responsible for Data and Research as an assistant to the Oral Health Program Coordinator. It is crucial to any program to be able to assess the ongoing need for its existence as well as to monitor its ability to achieve its goals. This role is an unrealistic one for the current coordinator to totally fulfill in addition to the actual running of the program. We are doing great things for oral health in Maine and being able to assess the impact of programs like the School Oral Health Program and other oral health efforts is an important public health function and a significant benefit to our friends and neighbors here in Maine.

The second is another position creation for someone to function as an Oral Health Educator. The School Oral Health Program is designed largely for the prevention of oral health problems as well as the actual delivery of what you might call routine dental services. In a school based setting education is obviously a huge feature to be included, not to mention all the oral health education that could be happening outside of schools, like with parents of young children.

I also totally agree with the idea that this bill should direct MaineCare to develop an alternative payment pilot for financing school-based oral health services. The services and mode of delivery for these services is distinctly different from what I did in my private office and if possible I would like to see specific structure for maximizing the clinical time providers spend in schools as opposed to navigating billing issues.

I have lived in Maine for 36 years and have seen the so called Department of Oral Health "evolve", but perhaps "change" is the correct word, over that time. We had actually a fairly robust group here when I first arrived in 1987 with about seven or eight wonderful people, most of whom are dear friends, working on oral health. Since then the numbers dwindled over time but with your forward looking support we are once again heading in the direction of better oral health in our State. This is just another practical step in the chain.

Thank you so much for all of your time and energy,

Respectfully submitted,



Stephen C Mills, DDS, FICD, FASAD, DABPD