

Testimony of Dr. Wendy Alpaugh in Support of LD 1837: An Act to Increase Oral  
Health Services  
May 11, 2023

*Honorable Joe Baldacci and the honorable Michele Meyer and members of the Health and Human Services Committee, this testimony is to express my support for LD 1837*

I am reaching out to you as an oral health provider in rural Maine who depended on the Oral Health Program for years.

When I began my dental practice in Maine over forty years ago, I immediately reached out to the Maine Oral Health Program where I found amazing resources to help me educate my community and patients. There were “tubs” that had printed materials (written in understandable terms), hands on supplies (eg models of teeth, large toothbrushes; models of lungs of smokers and non-smokers – for smoking cessation education) that students and their families could explore and would stimulate them to ask questions, and there were ideas to help me get health messages across.

I used these tubs and their contents at health fairs and in the schools. People were fascinated by the contents! These resources were wonderful, but it took dedicated, creative state employees who listened to and heard what oral health care providers needed to develop these resources. The people that staffed the oral health program provided a wealth of knowledge re: oral health education, data regarding the state of oral health in Maine, and facilitated collaboration among stakeholders for improving oral health in Maine.

I also appreciated the School Oral Health component that my community benefited from. The under 40 year old members of my community have few cavities, for the most part. I attribute much of this to the school fluoride program and the education that happened in collaboration with the Oral Health Program.

When I wanted to provide dental screenings in the schools and preventive services at the local nursing facility, who did I turn to? The Oral Health Program staff who helped me with portable equipment that I could borrow. Without those tools, I may not have been able to provide those services.

I have missed having access to the program over the past eight years. Those state employees were dedicated, hard working, and advocated for good oral health for our residents. They were an essential piece in the incomplete, but improved, state of oral health of Maine residents due, I believe, to their diligence and caring.

I would like to see a fully supported Oral Health Program reinstated in Maine. I hope you will support LD 1837 for the wellbeing of all of us! Good Oral Health is the start toward good overall Health!

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