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*The Maine Oral Health  
Coalition represents a  
statewide group of  
organizations and  
individuals who work  
together as a network  
to support each other  
in raising awareness  
and promoting oral  
health and dental  
disease prevention  
activities, through  
community education  
and advocacy, with  
the vision that oral  
health is valued as a  
vital element of  
wellness for all Maine  
residents.*

Testimony of the Maine Oral Health Coalition  
Submitted by Judith Feinstein, Coordinator  
In Support of

LD 2214: An Act to Make Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government, General Fund and Other Funds and to Change Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2024 and June 30, 2025  
**Public Hearing: February 26, 2024**

Senators Rotundo and Baldacci, Representatives Sachs and Meyer and members of the Joint Standing Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Health and Human Services, this testimony is submitted on behalf of the Maine Oral Health Coalition (MOHC). As you consider the supplemental budget, please ensure that there is funding included to cover the provisions in LD 1837, which was carried over from last session and had unanimous support from the Health and Human Services Committee. A recap of my testimony from May 2023 follows.

LD 1837 proposes to take significant steps to bolster the Maine CDC's Oral Health Program. It makes permanent two key positions that can significantly add to efforts already underway to rebuild the capacity the program had, ten years ago and more. The need for that level of capacity still exists. These positions represent a modest investment by adding infrastructure to strengthen our state's Oral Health Program and create a backbone for the capacity needed to develop and implement interventions that will improve the oral health of all Maine residents, across the lifespan. Oral health is integral to overall health, and a state level program should be adequately funded and staffed. An oral health educator and a data & research assistant will expand the program's capacity to coordinate with other health promotion efforts, evaluate and enhance the state's long-standing and effective school-based oral health program, enhance its ability to collect and analyze reliable data and to evaluate program effectiveness, and finally, to compete successfully to bring federal dollars to Maine. I know this, based on my 18 years of experience as the State Oral Health Program Manager and more years as a staff member; during that time, we obtained over \$4 million to help improve the oral health of all people in Maine.

National guidelines assert that state oral health programs with adequate infrastructure and capacity are integral to the mission of state health agencies. Other provisions of LD 1837 supported increasing *sustainability* and *accountability* – guardrails for an effective program that can make a real difference in the lives of Maine people.

Thank you for your support for including funding in LD 2214 to cover the provisions in LD 1837 and your continued support of the Maine CDC's Oral Health Program.

/s/ *Judith Feinstein*

Judith Feinstein, MSPH, Coordinator