

**Testimony in Support of LD 1652 – "An Act To Improve Access to Oral Health
Care through Tax Credits for Dental Professionals and MaineCare
Reimbursement Reform"**

**Submitted by Dr. Kailee Jorgenson, DMD
Clinical Director, Mainely Teeth
President, Maine Oral Health Centers Alliance
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Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services:

My name is Dr. Kailee Jorgenson, DMD. I serve as the Clinical Director at Mainely Teeth and as President of the Maine Oral Health Centers Alliance. I am writing today to express my strong support for LD 1652, which proposes a targeted and fiscally responsible approach to improving dental care access for Maine's most vulnerable populations through the MaineCare program.

Maine faces a well-documented shortage of dental professionals willing or able to accept MaineCare patients. Low reimbursement rates and high overhead costs create a disincentive for participation in the program. LD 1652 addresses this issue on two crucial fronts.

First, the proposed *Dental Care Access Credit* under §5219-CCC provides a refundable tax credit of up to \$5,000 to Maine-licensed dental professionals who are active MaineCare providers. This credit offsets real-world costs such as licensing and malpractice insurance—two significant expenses that can discourage dentists from serving low-income patients. By easing this financial burden, the bill encourages more providers to remain enrolled in MaineCare and actively see Medicaid patients.

Second, LD 1652 directs the Department of Health and Human Services to amend reimbursement rules so that MaineCare payments for dental services more closely align with commercial benchmarks. Reimbursing at 75% of the national *commercial* rate and covering all dental case management codes are essential reforms to ensure that participation in the MaineCare program is both sustainable and competitive. These changes would help dental practices offset the true cost of care, support comprehensive treatment planning, and improve access for patients who often face long wait times or travel great distances for basic dental services. Serving MaineCare patients frequently involves additional barriers—such as missed appointments, greater care coordination needs, and administrative burdens—that disproportionately impact both providers and patients. These proposed changes would significantly reduce those barriers and provide

vital support to dental offices working to ensure their patients can complete necessary treatment in a timely and effective manner.

By coupling direct financial relief with structural reform of reimbursement policies, LD 1652 offers a comprehensive solution to a growing public health challenge. The bill also includes appropriate safeguards and transparency, such as certification requirements and annual reporting by DHHS and the Bureau of Revenue Services.

This legislation is a critical investment in Maine's dental infrastructure and will help ensure that children, seniors, and low-income families can access the routine and preventive oral health care they need.

I urge the committee to vote **Ought to Pass** on LD 1652. Thank you for your time and your commitment to improving health care access in Maine.

Respectfully submitted,

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