



Advocating the right to quality,
affordable health care for all Mainers.

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Testimony in Support of LD 1361

An Act to Require Insurance Coverage for Covered Dental Services Provided by Licensed Dental Hygienists and to Authorize Licensed Dental Hygienists to Bill Commercial Dental Insurance

April 24, 2025

Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee On Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services, thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments in support of LD 1361.

My name is Jakob Giron, a Policy Advocate at Consumers for Affordable Health.

CAHC is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that advocates the right to quality, affordable health care for every person in Maine. CAHC serves as Maine's Health Insurance Consumer Assistance Program (CAP), which operates a toll-free HelpLine. Our HelpLine fielded over 7,200 calls and emails last year from people across Maine who needed help obtaining, keeping, using, or fixing problems with private health insurance or with accessing or affording health care services. CAHC also serves as the Ombudsman program for Maine's Medicaid program, MaineCare, and helps people apply for and navigate the enrollment process for MaineCare. It is with that background that we provide these comments.

LD 1361 would require insurance carriers that provide coverage for dental care to provide coverage for services performed by a licensed dental hygienist acting within the scope of their license and to reimburse those dental hygienists directly for the services they provide.

Our Helpline staff often hear from people seeking assistance with finding an oral health provider for preventive or curative care to alleviate an oral health issue, including pain or infection. With exception to one, parts of all Maine counties are designated as a dental care health professional shortage area.¹ As you might imagine, it is incredibly frustrating having to share resources, including a list of dental clinics throughout the state, that we know are likely to have long waiting lists to see new patients. It is even more frustrating when the only option

¹ [Map of Health Professional Shortage Areas: Dental Care, by County, April 2025 - Rural Health Information Hub](#)

some people have is to go to a hospital emergency department to be seen but, in most cases, not treated for the oral health care they need.

The Center for Disease for Disease Control (CDC) reports that:

- Oral health is essential to general health and well-being;²
- Oral disease can cause pain and infections that may lead to problems with eating, speaking, and learning; and
- Oral health disease can also affect social interactions, academic achievement, and job potential.³

Research has shown that preventive dental care can significantly improve oral health, particularly in children.⁴ We believe Dental Hygienists play an important role in providing preventive care and that this bill will help improve overall access to oral health care in Maine.

Thank you for supporting LD 1361.

² [Oral Health Facts | Oral Health | CDC](#)

³ O'Connell JM, Rockwell J, Ouellet J, Tomar SL, Maas W. Health Aff. 2016. 1;35(12):2224-2232.
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27920310/>

⁴ [The Impact of Socioeconomic Factors on Pediatric Oral Health: A Review - PMC](#)