



Consumers for Affordable Health Care

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

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Testimony in Support of LD 1615

"An Act to Expand Access to Oral Health Care by Creating a New Path for Obtaining a License to Practice Dentistry"

April 30, 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 1615, An Act to Expand Access to Oral Health Care by Creating a New Path for Obtaining a License to Practice Dentistry.

My name is Jakob Giron, a Policy Advocate at Consumers for Affordable Health Care. 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. It is with that background that we provide these comments.

This bill aims to create a new type of dental license called the "Adjunct Dentist" license. It would allow dentists who were trained outside the United States to practice in Maine while working under the general supervision of a licensed dentist. After three years of supervised practice, they would become eligible to apply for full licensure to practice independently.

Oftentimes, our Helpline staff hear from people seeking assistance with finding an oral health provider for preventive care or care to alleviate an oral health issue. Data released earlier this year indicates that over half of Mainers with dental coverage are concerned about being able to find a dentist near them that accepts their insurance, while 9-out-of-10 support implementing policies that create or expand programs to attract dentists to practice or accept more types of insurance in Maine.¹ This bill does exactly that, giving Mainers access to more dental providers who are well-qualified to meet their oral health needs.

The US Health Resources and Services Administration reports that, with the exception of one, parts of all counties in Maine are designated as dental care provider shortage areas.² The Center for Disease for Disease Control (CDC) reports that oral health is essential to general health and well-being.³ Oral health disease, a leading health problem, can cause symptoms that result in

¹ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1of-aZWztHbCJDGZODeqoWEVvYcokHw41/view>

² Map of Health Professional Shortage Areas: Dental Care, by County, April 2025 - Rural Health Information Hub

³ Oral Health Facts | Oral Health | CDC

problems with eating, speaking, and learning, often impacting social interactions, academic achievement, and job potential.⁴

Research has shown that preventive dental care can significantly improve oral health, particularly in children.⁵ This proposed legislation provides a mechanism for improving access to oral health services and will greatly benefit Mainers. We thank the committee for your work on this issue, both this session and in the past, and respectfully urge you to report this bill out of committee with a favorable recommendation. Thank you for your time.

⁴ 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/>

⁵ [The Impact of Socioeconomic Factors on Pediatric Oral Health: A Review - PMC](#)