



March 17, 2021

**Testimony in favor of LD 665: An Act To Promote Better Dental Care for Cancer Survivors**

Dear members of the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services,

My name is Dr. Michelle Mazur-Kary and I am a board certified endodontist (a dentist specializing in saving and preserving teeth) who practices in Auburn, Maine. I have been a dentist in Maine for over 35 years. In the past 10 years, I have treated more and more cancer patients and found that many have taken a class of medications called bisphosphonates. In brief, this medication can put patients at risk for a condition called osteonecrosis of the jaw (ONJ) which causes non-healing in the jaw after a traumatic procedure, such as a tooth extraction. Because of the incidence of ONJ, many dentists will not extract a tooth in a patient taking these drugs, even if the tooth is basically not restorable. This means, great lengths, and complicated procedures, such as difficult root canals, gum surgery, and crowns need to be performed in order for the patients to retain their teeth and avoid an ONJ incidence. Also, chemotherapy and radiation treatment causes severe dry mouth conditions that lead to painful ulcers and increased risk for root decay which progresses very quickly. This then leads to extensive dental treatments and situations where the teeth need to be maintained in the mouth at all cost. Not only are these patients dealing with there health issue (cancer), they have an added burden of having to deal with mouth pain, difficult dental procedures and unfortunately, increased financial burden. Having ones medical insurance include dental procedures that are the direct or indirect result of cancer treatments would be a tremendous help financially and emotionally.

Thus, I am writing in support of LD 655. Thank you for your time and support.

Sincerely,

Michelle Mazur-Kary, DDS, MPH  
Diplomate, American Board of Endodontics  
President/Owner, Central Maine Endodontics, P.A.  
Past President, Maine Dental Association