

LD 1349, An Act To Increase Transparency in Dental Billing

SUMMARY:

This bill requires a dentist, independent practice dental hygienist or denturist to provide notice to a patient before services are rendered to that patient of a charge for a procedure, equipment, materials or other measures necessary to protect the health and safety of patients and staff during a public health emergency such as a pandemic or other outbreak of infectious disease.

TESTIMONY: Written testimony can be found at this [link](#)

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ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION:

1. As drafted, bill requires notice be provided of a charge before services are rendered. If intent is to require disclosure of the amount of any charge, consider clarifying language in bill? Also, consider that amount of any charge is not limited in any way?
2. Concerns expressed that dental offices would not be able to estimate costs in advance and would be difficult to implement because of changing prices and demand for PPE equipment.
3. Is this necessary? The Board of Dental Practice indicated the board has not received consumer inquiries and complaints related to surcharges or additional charges on dental bills for PPE since late summer. The committee requested [information from the Maine Dental Association](#) about whether dental practices are adding charges or fees associated with PPE.

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ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION (cont'd):

4. In response to inquiries, the Board of Dental Practice determined that there was no State law prohibiting additional charges for PPE after consulting with Bureau of Insurance and Attorney General. With regard to costs of treatment, Board rules require that estimated fees related to a dental treatment plan be reviewed with a patient prior to commencing treatment.
5. The Board of Dental Practice suggested that issues related to the shifting of operational costs to consumers during a public health emergency may be more appropriate for review as an unfair trade practice subject to enforcement by the Attorney General's Office. The board indicated that the board would have no ability to investigate and enforce the provisions in the bill in other settings where dental services are provided as the board only regulates individuals licensed by the board.
6. As drafted, bill applies only to licensees of the Board of Dental Practice. Are other providers or businesses adding charges in a similar manner?

FISCAL INFORMATION:

Not yet determined