



*Senator Eloise Vitelli
Senate Majority Leader
3 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0003
Office (207) 287-1515
Home (207) 443-4660*

*Testimony of Sen. Eloise Vitelli introducing
LD 1349, An Act To Increase Transparency in Dental Billing
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services
April 20, 2021*

Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler, esteemed members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee, my name is Eloise Vitelli, and I represent Senate District 23, which includes all of Sagadahoc County and the Town of Dresden in Lincoln County. I am before you today to introduce LD 1349, “An Act To Increase Transparency in Dental Billing.”

The idea for this bill was brought to me by a constituent, who was surprised by an additional charge on a dental bill in Fall 2020 that was not covered by his insurance. Upon asking his dental provider for details, he learned this charge was to cover personal protective equipment and other expenses his dentist had to take on in order to practice safely during the pandemic.

This additional charge was frustrating for my constituent, mostly because it was not disclosed to him before treatment. Around the same time I heard from this constituent, [news outlets reported](#) similar, and sometimes very expensive, fees being tacked on to bills by a variety of health care providers, with the patient – not their insurance – on the hook for this brand new charge.

Because of the nature of their work, dentists are more at risk for contracting COVID-19 from their patients than many other health care workers are. I’m deeply sympathetic to the great pains they had to take to keep themselves and their patients safe during this pandemic. But if these costs must be passed along to patients, they at least must be notified first. An additional \$20 or \$45 charge to cover safety expenses is simply irritating to many, but it can mean a great deal more for others.

I thank you for considering this bill, and I’m happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.