

RESOLUTION

Subject: Support for Expanded Access to Dental Care for the Comprehensive Health of Kentuckians

Submitted by: Greater Louisville Medical Society

Referred to: Reference Committee

WHEREAS, oral health problems and/or periodontal disease are strongly associated with medical health problems that cause severe disease burden in Kentucky, including multiple cancers (oral,¹ esophageal,² lung,³ pancreatic,⁴ colorectal^{5,6}), cardiovascular disease,^{7,8} pneumonia,⁹ and pregnancy/birth complications; and

WHEREAS, the American Medical Association (AMA) acknowledged the importance of oral health care for overall patient care and opened the door to collaboration with dental organizations such as the American Dental Association (ADA) in policy D-160.925 from 2023; and

WHEREAS, 27% of Kentucky adults ages 18-64 have lost 6 or more teeth because of tooth decay, infection, or gum disease; furthermore, there has been no improvement from 2016 to 2020¹⁰; and

WHEREAS, almost half of Kentucky adults in 2020 (43%) had not had a dental visit in the past year, which is drastically higher than the national average of 35%¹⁰; and

WHEREAS, in 2022, half of Kentuckians with incomes below \$50,000 who do not qualify for Medicaid have not had a dental visit in the past year, compared to 25% of Kentuckians with incomes above \$75,000¹¹ – suggesting that affordability is a barrier to accessing dental care in our state; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Benefit and Payment Parameters Notice for 2025 newly allows the states to choose to classify routine adult dental health coverage as an essential health benefit (EHB) in small group and individual marketplace plans¹²; and

WHEREAS, 75,000 Kentuckians currently receive coverage from small group and individual marketplace plans¹³ and could benefit medically from Kentucky's expansion of EHBs to include routine adult dental health coverage; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that KMA advocates for the adoption of policies that improve the accessibility of dental health care for Kentuckians; and be it further

RESOLVED, that KMA joins the Kentucky Oral Health Coalition in pursuing its mission of improving the oral health of all Kentuckians.

References

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