

April 8, 2022

Rep. Tina Liebling
477 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Rep. Jennifer Schultz
473 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dental Access Partners



Dear Chair Liebling and Chair Schultz:

As you may remember, Dental Access Partners is a coalition between Apple Tree Dental, Community Dental Care, and Hennepin Healthcare which are three of Minnesota's most essential providers of dental care for people on Minnesota Health Care Programs. We wanted to send along our thoughts on the HHS Omnibus bill and thank you for the dental provisions you included.

First, thank you for continual leadership on oral health and for passing an historic dental package last year that will strengthen the state's Dental Medicaid program for years to come. We believe provisions that you have included in HF4706 will build upon the great progress from last legislative session.

Thank you for including HF3147 authored by Rep. Reyer that would reinstate oral health benefits that were lost in 2009 amid a massive budget deficit. Restoring these benefits are essential to overall health and our limited adult benefit set has failed to meet the standard of care, putting both patients and providers at risk. Having a medically necessary dental benefit set will reduce costs by avoiding costly emergency room visits and hospitalizations and by reducing the overall cost of medical care for people with chronic diseases.

We also think changes to the dental utilization report will be useful information for the legislature and administration to understand access issues. However, we would like to make a suggestion on sections that would report the number of enrolled dentists who provided fee-for-service and PMAP dental services to medical assistance or MinnesotaCare patients within the previous calendar year in the following increments: one to nine patients, ten to 100 patients, and over 100 patients. Our recommendation would be to remove one to nine patients and add 100 to 1000, 1000 to 10,000 and over 10,000. We believe this data will help policy makers target state resources based on geographic locations that lack access and would help the state to invest in providers whose mission is to service MHCP enrollees.

Lastly, we are thankful that your bill includes some funding for the dental home pilot projects that were passed in 2021. However, national and state evaluation experts agree that the Dental Home Demonstration project needs to run for 3 to 5 years, not 2 years. The Dental Home Workgroup recommended to test several promising approaches in both urban and rural regions, and to carry out a Demonstration Project and evaluate the results from several geographic regions, spanning 3-5 years, we recommend funding this program for at least 4 years. This would fund multiple projects that would be running concurrently during this time frame.

Our organizations have proven track records expanding access throughout Minnesota and we welcome the opportunity to continue building a comprehensive Medicaid dental program in Minnesota by using innovative workforce models and providing care outside of the traditional bricks and mortar settings.

We again greatly appreciate your leadership on oral health and look forward to continuing to work together.

Sincerely,

Mike Helgeson, CEO
Apple Tree Dental

Mary Seieroe
Chair of Dentistry
HCMC

Karen Kleinhans, CEO
Community Dental Care