



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF DELAWARE
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DENTAL COVERAGE FOR ADULT MEDICAID RECIPIENTS

Support for SB 92

May 2019

The League of Women Voters of Delaware urges passage of SB 92, and provision of the funding, so that adult Medicaid recipients can have access to a much-needed service. This is based on the position of the League of Women Voters of the US to provide access to a basic level of health care for all U.S. residents while working to reduce health care costs.

The League has been advocating on this issue for the past several years, and we sincerely hope that its time has finally come.

Importance of Dental Care~~Health Impact: The need for dental care has been well documented, but its cost often means it is treated as discretionary. Adults with limited resources may choose to do without it, paving the way for serious, and more expensive, health problems.

Research is ongoing to document the many ways that the lack of dental care affects the body. It can affect the skin, the central nervous system, the gastrointestinal tract, and the body's cardiac system. (1) The range of diseases that can be caused or affected by infections in the mouth include diabetes, heart disease, stroke, acute bronchitis, and pneumonia. (2)

Economic and Social Impact: As a practical matter, preventive care for the teeth and gums makes good sense for tax payers. It can keep more serious – and costly – diseases from developing or progressing more rapidly, thereby saving Medicaid dollars in the long run.

It also makes sense for the individual. Good oral health can make all the difference in a person's ability to get and keep a job. First, it can affect the ability to speak clearly – and poor communication can close the doors to many jobs. (3) (4) (5) The complications associated with untreated dental caries and periodontal disease can also result in an unsightly appearance, which is often cause for the failure to be hired. But, even for those who do find a job, dental pain can make for poor performance, stemming from difficulty concentrating on daily tasks and, once serious health problems develop, excessive absenteeism. (6) (7)

The effects of dental disease can also impact such every day activities as eating and sleeping. Plus, it can create barriers to normal human interaction, making an individual unwelcome in

social settings. (8) (9) While such impacts may seem insignificant, a fulfilling life is made up of an accumulation of just such matters.

Action Needed: Passage of SB 92 and funding included in the State's FY 2019-20 Budget

SOURCES

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