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## **Adult Dental Medicaid Enhancement**

This legislation would enhance existing emergency dental Medicaid services for adults to include preventive and restorative dental care.

- House Bill 105 will expand the range of adult dental services allowed under the Medicaid program to allow a more complete level of adult dental services. This legislation would make available preventive and restorative dental services, in addition to the existing dental emergency services, for adults enrolled in the Medicaid program.
- Medicaid dental coverage currently provides solely emergency dental care for Medicaid recipients aged 21 or older — this is limited to relief of pain and acute infection, which often lead to extraction of permanent teeth.
- Services provided by this legislation include exams, cleaning, tooth restoration or extraction, or upper and lower full denture — resulting in a preventative health benefit for those receiving this service.
- The \$1.3 million dollar GF investment for a total full year expenditure of \$10.2 million is a good return on the state's investment, and provides a significant leverage of state funds.
- There are parameters for this program — to contain costs and keep this program within the fiscal limits set by this legislation.
- This legislation sets a parameter for the benefit — there is a set cap of \$1,150 a year for dental services for each individual, per year, framing the benefit and setting a financial cap.
- The legislation creates a separate appropriation for this program. And, if there is greater participation than anticipated, the department will evaluate the need near the end of a fiscal year, and prorate the cap for the next fiscal year, ensuring that the program stays within its appropriation.
- In addition, there is a 3 year sunset on the program which provides a trial period, allowing for an evaluation of the program — which provides the opportunity to make data-driven decisions about whether this is a program the state wants to continue, and what the true costs will be.

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- The FY2007 budget is based on implementation of the dental services by spring 2007. This is to provide time for adoption of regulations, amending the Medicaid State Plan and Medicaid system changes for the addition of the new service. The estimated FY2007 budget is \$2.633 million. Of this amount the Alaska Mental Health Trust authority has authorized \$0.425 million in MHTAAR, \$0.220 million would be new state GF and the remaining \$1.988 million in federal funding (Medicaid FFP).
- Access to dental services has been highlighted as one of the major issue of Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority beneficiaries and the Trust believes a Medicaid expansion is the most cost-effective way to address this access issue.
- This coverage expansion was proposed as infections in the mouth are no different than infections in other parts of the body; dental infections cause pain, lost time at work and missing teeth can affect employability. Waiting for dental emergencies often results in more expensive dental care and limits the dentist's ability to address dental problems that will result in future dental emergencies.
- Recent studies have shown the link between oral health and other systemic/chronic disease including: management of diabetes with active dental infections and links with cardiovascular disease.