

LB358

March 2024

- Intent of bill is to increase Medicaid fees to dentists by 25%.
- Medicaid is a partnership between the state (Medicaid and Long-Term Care), the Legislators (who appropriate the funds), the dentist providers, the managed care plans (that administer the plan), and the patients.
- This is not about dentists making more money. This is about Nebraskans who rely on Medicaid having access to dental care.
- When people go without dental care, their tooth decay and gum disease progresses. This leads to pain, infection, and difficulty eating and speaking. It also can exacerbate medical conditions such as diabetes and cancer.
- Adults with Medicaid lose many work hours due to untreated dental disease. This is not only challenging to support their families but employers lose workers and productivity.
- Research is clear that when adults move into good oral health, they are more likely to apply for promotions and jobs with better pay. Many will make enough money to move off of Medicaid. This means instead of relying on a public program, they will contribute more to the tax base.
- Thousands of hours of school are missed by children related to dental disease.
- About 1/3 of dentists provide some measure of Medicaid dentistry. The goal is to make the Medicaid fees closer to commercial insurance reimbursement. Even with LB358, Medicaid will still be the lowest paying plan. Nebraska dentists who practice near the South Dakota border are abandoning NE Medicaid and choosing SD Medicaid due to the higher payments.
- When adults can't get dental care, they seek emergency care in hospital emergency departments. Unfortunately, most ED's can't treat the root cause of the dental problem. They are only able to prescribe an antibiotic and a pain killer. Thousands of dollars are wasted in Medicaid spending for dental when ED's are used.

