



May 7, 2021

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

Sen. Michelle Benson
3109 Minnesota Senate Bldg.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chairs Liebling and Benson:

As conference committees negotiate important details, we want to thank both of you for putting such a high priority on dental legislation. For the first time, based on more than a year of collaboration, a consensus dental home framework is now endorsed by key leaders from both parties, DHS, and dental stakeholders from across the state. Elements of this consensus are contained in either the House or Senate bills. As conference committee leaders, you have the power to set a new course that will increase access to care and program transparency and accountability.

As legislative champions, we urge you both to strongly support the provisions laid out in the House and Senate by:

- 1. Updating dental base rates to align with 2018 submitted charges, and reducing the CAD add on from 37% to 20% using the House language**
- 2. Reinstating coverage for periodontal benefits as included in both House and Senate bills**
- 3. Establishing a Dental Home workgroup and demonstrations projects, using the House language**
- 4. Supporting the continuation of telehealth measures proposed by Senator Rosen and Representative Morrison**
- 5. Supporting dental workforce needs including student loan repayment, collaborative dental hygiene practice, rural dental residencies and dental assistants to be developed by dental stakeholders for the coming session**

Updating reimbursements to align with this century's costs is essential to expand dental services for all providers, both CAD and non-CAD. Without updated reimbursements, no administrative structure can succeed!

The House legislation rebases MA reimbursement rates from submitted charges from 1989 to 2018. In addition to the benefit of updated base rates, one important compromise is a higher increase in the rates paid to private dentists to encourage increased participation. With the new base rates, the current 37% CAD add-on can be reduced to 20%, which will sustain essential organizations like ours until the new value-based dental home reimbursements are in place.

We strongly support your efforts to increase administrative transparency and accountability.

Because we contract with health plans, we are caught in the middle of this battle over program administration. However, the House budget utilizes the saving from a carve out to increase rates. ***We cannot stress enough the importance of rebasing reimbursements!*** This change, along with the restoration of periodontal benefits will sustain our programs and expand access to dental care at hundreds of urban and rural locations statewide.

Thank you both for making Minnesotans' oral health a high priority this legislative session. We look forward to helping you in whatever way we can as you finalize your budget. If you have any questions, please reach us through our lobbyist, Tara Erickson, at 612.280.8998 or Tara@tgeconsultingmn.com.

Gratefully,

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Apple Tree Dental

Karen Kleinhans, M.H.A.
Chief Executive Officer
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Mary Seieroe, D.D.S.
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