
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 380 Session of
2009

INTRODUCED BY BROWN, DRUCKER, DeWEESE, BAKER, BELFANTI,
D. COSTA, FRANKEL, GEORGE, GOODMAN, HARKINS, HENNESSEY,
HORNAMAN, JOHNSON, KORTZ, KULA, MURT, O'NEILL, PARKER, QUINN,
REICHLEY, SEIP, SIPTROTH, STABACK, STURLA, J. TAYLOR, THOMAS
AND YOUNGBLOOD, JUNE 25, 2009

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, JUNE 25,
2009

A RESOLUTION

1 Directing the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to study
2 and to issue a report on the status of and any disparities
3 found in dental care for Pennsylvanians with disabilities.

4 WHEREAS, Dental care is vitally important for each of us,
5 affecting overall health, employability and social inclusion;
6 and

7 WHEREAS, Many individuals, including the unemployed, those
8 of low income, the uninsured and the elderly, have great
9 difficulty seeing a dentist and paying for dental care, and
10 those who have disabilities have greater difficulties still
11 because of the very nature of dental offices, many of which are
12 handicapped-inaccessible; and

13 WHEREAS, Beyond structural inaccessibility, many individuals
14 who are disabled are insured through Medicaid and there is a
15 chronic and serious shortage of dentists and dental care
16 professionals available to Medicaid patients; and

1 WHEREAS, Dental patients with disabilities may present to the
2 dental health professional other challenges that they are
3 unwilling to undertake, including the need for anesthesia and
4 the concomitant need for specialized anesthesia application; and

5 WHEREAS, Lack of dental care is a recognized indicator of
6 greater likelihood of chronic illnesses and poor health
7 outcomes; and

8 WHEREAS, Dental care and preventive dental health are far
9 less expensive to deliver than is care to those who are
10 chronically and seriously ill; and

11 WHEREAS, The breadth and depth of the problem of lack of
12 access to dental care must be fully understood before systemic
13 changes are made in the way health care professionals are
14 recruited and incentivized to serve persons with disabilities
15 and other underserved communities; therefore be it

16 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives direct the
17 Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to conduct an in-depth
18 study of the disparities that exist in accessing and receiving
19 dental care among persons with disabilities in this Commonwealth
20 and to issue a report; and be it further

21 RESOLVED, That the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee
22 determine the need for and availability of additional dental
23 providers for children and for adults 21 years of age and older,
24 county by county, throughout the State, especially examining the
25 availability of physically accessible dental offices and of
26 dental equipment in those offices in the counties; and be it
27 further

28 RESOLVED, That the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee
29 examine availability of specific services for children and
30 adults with disabilities in community-based care and specialized

1 care; the opportunity for dentists to perform deep
2 sedation/anesthesia, conscious sedation and nitrous oxide for
3 these children and adults; which services accept Medicaid; and
4 which counties need additional dental care and specialty
5 support; and be it further

6 RESOLVED, That the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee
7 examine the quality of dental care received by persons with
8 disabilities, assuring that quality services are provided; and
9 be it further

10 RESOLVED, That the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee
11 study its findings and make recommendations as to what will
12 preserve the quality dental services already in place and what
13 mechanisms, including the feasibility of increasing Medicaid
14 dental care premiums, liberalizing dental loan repayment
15 programs for service in underserved areas, requiring private
16 insurers to pay for anesthesia services for dental patients
17 under five years of age and for persons with disabilities who
18 need such service, and work force initiatives to responsibly
19 expand the scopes of practice of carefully supervised dental
20 assistants, will incentivize more dental practitioners to open
21 their practices to persons with disabilities; and be it further

22 RESOLVED, That the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee
23 compile a report based on its findings and recommendations and
24 submit the report to the House of Representatives as soon as
25 possible, but not later than one year following the adoption of
26 this resolution.