



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

File #: 14-2444, **Version:** 1

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

ADULT ORAL HEALTH CARE

WHEREAS, Cook County is a home rule unit of local government pursuant to Article VII, Section 6 (a) of the 1970 Illinois Constitution, and as such may exercise any power and perform any function pertaining to its government and affairs; and

WHEREAS, this country's strength and ability to prosper is grounded in the health and safety of its people. For many years now millions of Americans could not afford adequate healthcare. The Affordable Care Act affords us an opportunity to provide and improve health care services to every American; and

WHEREAS, while the passage of the Affordable Care Act has moved this country in a direction for all people to have health insurance, it would be remiss of us not to acknowledge the need for adjustments as a program of this magnitude is implemented; and

WHEREAS, the Affordable Care Act excludes adult oral health care services while it covers many essential health benefits. It has been acknowledged by oral health care agencies and professionals that oral health care is essential to insure overall quality of health; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Surgeon General refers to dental disease as a silent epidemic. In 2000 the U.S. Surgeon General issued a report on the Oral Health of American, in it the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research showed the link between general health and oral health. The report went on to say that many systemic diseases and conditions have oral manifestations. These manifestations may be the initial sign of clinical disease and as such serve to inform clinicians and individuals of the need for further assessment. More importantly, the report notes that the oral cavity is a portal of entry as well as the site of disease for microbial infections that affect general health status; and

WHEREAS, it is also acknowledge by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that the lack of access to dental care is extremely important because left untreated oral disease can lead not only to pain, infection and tooth loss, but also contribute to an increased risk for serious medical conditions such as diabetes, heart disease and poor birth outcomes; and

WHEREAS, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention there are threats to oral health across one's lifespan. Nearly one-third of all adults in the United States have untreated tooth decay. One in seven adults aged 35 to 44 years has gum disease, this increases to one in every four adults aged 65 years and older; and

WHEREAS, according to Oral Health America, the older adult population is the fastest growing segment of the United States and many are facing a dire situation when it comes to oral health. Accordingly, by 2030 there will be 72+ million older adults in the U.S., most won't have access to dental care, impacting overall health; and

WHEREAS, a 2013 study, issued by Advance for Nurse Practitioners and Physicians Assistants, reported that 30% of older adults lose their teeth, 23% have gum disease, 50% have untreated cavities and that there are 30,000 oral and pharyngeal cancers diagnosed annually; and

WHEREAS, the American Dental Association (ADA) states that oral health is essential for a healthy America. The ADA

further states that no law, regulation or mandate will improve the oral health of the public unless policymakers, patients and dentists work together with a shared understanding of the importance of oral health and its relationship to overall health; and

WHEREAS, the ADA states that prevention pays and that the key to improving and maintaining good oral health is by preventing oral disease.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the President and the Cook County Board of Commissioners call upon the President of the United States, the House and Senate to consider adult oral health care coverage under the Affordable Care Act.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a suitable copy of the Resolution be tendered to the President of the United States of America, the House and the Senate.