

TO THE HONORABLE SENATE

The Committee on Health and Welfare to which was referred Senate Bill No. S. 94, entitled "An act relating to expanding Medicaid beneficiaries' access to dental care and establishing the VDent dental assistance program"

respectfully reports that it has considered the same and recommends that the bill be amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Sec. 1. 33 V.S.A. chapter 19, subchapter 4 is added to read:

Subchapter 4. Coverage for Dental Services

§ 1991. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter:

(1) "Dental hygienist" means an individual licensed to practice as a dental hygienist under 26 V.S.A. chapter 12.

(2) "Dental services" means preventive, diagnostic, or corrective procedures related to the teeth and associated structures of the oral cavity.

(3) "Dental therapist" means an individual licensed to practice as a dental therapist under 26 V.S.A. chapter 12.

(4) "Dentist" means an individual licensed to practice dentistry under 26 V.S.A. chapter 12.

§ 1992. MEDICAID COVERAGE FOR ADULT DENTAL SERVICES

(a) Vermont Medicaid shall provide coverage for medically necessary dental services provided by a dentist, dental therapist, or dental hygienist working within the scope of the provider's license as follows:

(1) Up to two visits per calendar year for preventive services, including prophylaxis and fluoride treatment, with no co-payment. These services shall not be counted toward the annual maximum benefit amount set forth in subdivision (2) of this subsection.

(2) Diagnostic, restorative, and endodontic procedures, to a maximum of \$1,000.00 per calendar year, provided that the Department of Vermont Health Access may approve expenditures in excess of that amount when exceptional medical circumstances so require.

(3) Other dental services as determined by the Department by rule.

(b) The Department of Vermont Health Access shall develop a reimbursement structure for dental services in the Vermont Medicaid program that encourages dentists, dental therapists, and dental hygienists to provide preventive care.

Sec. 2. DENTAL ACCESS AND REIMBURSEMENT WORKING GROUP;
REPORT

(a) The Department of Vermont Health Access, in consultation with the Board of Dental Examiners and the Vermont State Dental Society, shall convene a working group of interested stakeholders to:

(1) evaluate current Medicaid reimbursement rates to dentists, dental therapists, and other providers of dental services and determine the amount of fiscally responsible increases to the rates for specific services that would be needed in order to attract additional providers to participate in the Vermont Medicaid program;

(2) determine the feasibility of and costs associated with establishing a State dental assistance program to provide access to affordable dental services for Vermont residents who have lower income and are enrolled in Medicare; and

(3) explore opportunities to further expand access to dental care in Vermont, including:

(A) examining the potential to reimburse dentists, dental therapists, and dental hygienists for teledentistry services; and

(B) exploring the possible integration of dental services into the scope of services provided through accountable care organizations.

(b)(1) On or before November 1, 2019, the Department of Vermont Health Access shall provide to the House Committee on Health Care and the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare the working group's findings and recommendations regarding the feasibility and costs of creating a dental assistance program for Medicare beneficiaries as described in subdivision (a)(2) of this section and on opportunities to further expand access to dental care as described in subdivision (a)(3) of this section. The report shall also include the amount of funding that would be needed to achieve the reimbursement rates determined by the working group pursuant to subdivision (a)(1) of this section.

(2) The Department of Vermont Health Access shall report on the amount of funding necessary to achieve the reimbursement rates determined by the working group pursuant to subdivision (a)(1) of this section as part of the Department's fiscal year 2021 budget presentation.

Sec. 3. AMENDMENT TO MEDICAID STATE PLAN

If necessary, the Secretary of Human Services shall request approval from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services for an amendment to Vermont's Medicaid State Plan to include the expanded Medicaid dental benefits set forth in 33 V.S.A. § 1992.

Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATES

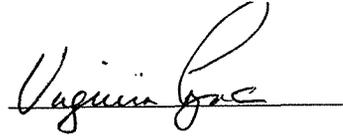
(a) Sec. 1 (33 V.S.A. § 1991), Sec. 2 (dental access and reimbursement working group), Sec. 3 (State Plan amendment), and this section shall take effect on passage.

(b) Sec. 1 (33 V.S.A. § 1992) shall take effect on the later of July 1, 2019 or approval from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services of the State Plan amendment for expanded Medicaid dental benefits.

And that after passage the title of the bill be amended to read:

An act relating to expanding Medicaid beneficiaries' access to dental care.

(Committee vote: 5-0-0)



Senator Lyons
FOR THE COMMITTEE