

ADA American Dental Association

America's leading advocate for oral health

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HR 2220 Essential Oral Health Care Act of 2009

The "Essential Oral Health Care Act of 2009" (H.R. 2220) ensures that individuals covered by a state's dental Medicaid plan have access to oral health care services to the same extent as such services are available to the population of the state. The bill is sponsored by Representatives Mike Ross (D-AR), Mike Simpson (R-ID), and Edolphus Towns (D-NY).

H.R. 2220 targets the fundamental problem with the dental Medicaid program (inadequate funding) by giving a state an option (this is not a mandate) of receiving enhanced federal matching funds if the state chooses to redesign its plan in a manner that:

- pays dentists market rate fees,
- eliminates administrative barriers,
- ensures there are enough dentists signed up and willing to provide care, and
- educates parents and other caregivers on the importance of seeking care to ensure that there is a demand for needed dental services.

The bill also provides federal grants (\$3 million per year for fiscal years 2010 through 2014) to support community-based initiatives that provide free oral health services to the underserved, such as MOM programs run by many state dental societies. Dentists provide millions of dollars of donated care each year and the grants could be used to purchase portable or mobile dental equipment and to pay for operational costs, including service delivery costs for the provision of free care. The federal grants provided in H.R. 2220 will facilitate the continued viability of these very effective programs.

The American Dental Association urges Members of Congress to cosponsor the "Essential Oral Health Care Act" (H.R. 2220).

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