

SACOPEE  VALLEY
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Testimony of Dr. Israel Adeloeye,

In Support of LD 1301: An Act to Improve Access to Preventive, Cost-Saving Dental Services”

Friday, April 21, 2017

Senator Brakey, Representative Hymanson and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, my name is Dr. Israel Adeloeye and I have practiced dentistry at Sacopee Valley Health Center (SVHC) in Porter for almost two years. Unfortunately, I am unable to join you today, but I wanted to submit this testimony in strong support of LD 1301.

SVHC has not always been able to offer the patients in our community integrated dental services with their primary medical and behavioral health care. However, just over 5 years ago, we were fortunate to have been awarded funds through the State of Maine after the dental referendum passed, as well as being awarded an Oral Health Services expansion grant through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). There was a tremendous need for affordable access to dental services in our region, and that became abundantly clear when we immediately filled our practice shortly after opening the dental facility about 19 months ago. We are now at full capacity, serving 436 children and 1169 adults and still accepting an average of 6-8 new patients daily.

In all of my years of training and practice in Massachusetts, I have rarely seen patients with the severity of oral health needs as I have seen since I moved to Maine. More often it seems I am running an emergency dental clinic due to the high number of surgical procedures I perform. Mouth full of broken down teeth and abscesses in both young and the elderly is a daily occurrence at the clinic. Some of my new patients have been on recurrent antibiotic dosages for dental infection for well over a year due to lack of access to dental care. Many of the young adult patients are partially or completely edentulous due to lack of dental coverage to address basic restorative needs. I have many patients that do not smile or talk in public due to low self-esteem associated with poor dentition.

LD 1301 will guarantee that more low income adults and children will be able to receive screenings, cleanings, and other preventive and restorative services that will lead to their overall health and well-being. Additionally, because we are unable to receive reimbursement for the majority of dental services we provide to adults with MaineCare coverage-passing this bill will increase our ability to serve more of those individuals by creating greater financial sustainability for the program at our Health Center.

On behalf of the patients I provide dental care for and those who could become my patients through enactment of this bill, please vote to support LD 1301 to help address this dire issue and put us on the path of ending the oral health crisis facing our state.