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2021 Legislative Priorities

Support HB819 (Rep. Wallingford) - Legislation to Support Local Public Water Fluoridation Decisions

House Bill 819 was filed by Representative Wayne Wallingford to ensure that local people benefit from the input of their county health department in considering public water fluoridation.

This legislation will ensure that community members and decision-makers are fully informed with accurate information from local people working to support community health.

The county health department is the only local agency charged with assuring community health

The local decision-making body (city council, county commission, water board, etc.) will request information from the local public health agency (LPHA, the county health department) about the practice of public water fluoridation. Such information will be available to the public and will be part of the public record.

Many areas of the state prefer to hear from the local community rather than from outside people.

The proposed legislation would mean that the LPHA would provide basic information on fluoridation and the impact of discontinuing fluoridation when that is being considered.

(Similar to SB619 in 2020 session and to SB278 & HB975 in 2019 session)

Continue to Fund Medicaid Adult Dental Benefits and expand to include comprehensive benefits Thanks to the Missouri Legislature for ongoing support of a limited Medicaid adult dental benefit, including preventive care.

The Coalition recognizes that setting Missouri's budget is a challenging task and ask that you continue to support the prudent decision of the Missouri Legislature to fund Medicaid adult dental benefits.

In 2014, Emergency Room (ER) usage for untreated dental conditions neared \$17 million. Since reinstatement of a limited adult dental benefit package in May 2016, Missouri has seen nearly 50% reduction in ER usage for untreated dental conditions, ensuring a more efficient Medicaid system.

Access to routine dental care, including preventive services, saves limited state resources in additional ways.

The National Association of Dental Plans released a study in late 2017 showing that adults receiving Medicaid preventive dental benefits have lower costs for chronic health conditions. Many studies indicate that dental health is integral to overall health.

This positive policy change has increased health, employability and access to oral health care.

Increasing benefits to a comprehensive level will help ensure that the ongoing oral health of Medicaid-eligible adults is supported.

Increase Access to Dental Care

Medicaid dental provider rates are low in Missouri. As a result, many private dentists do not participate in Medicaid. While federally qualified health centers provide services to many Missourians, an increase in provider rates will ensure that more private dentists provide services to those eligible for Medicaid.