

STATE LEGISLATURE

Good News: FY 2026 Budget Maintains Dental Program Funding

The Michigan Legislature passed, and the governor signed, the much-delayed 2025-26 state budget at the beginning of October. This occurred after a very brief government shutdown that had no impact on state services. The budget signing represented the culmination of several months of contentious fighting between the state House of Representatives and the Senate.

The MDA, as well as other stakeholders, were able to defeat proposals that would have cut the adult dental Medicaid program by \$21 million, cut the \$3 million that paid for an increase to the facility fee for dental procedures for special needs patients requiring anesthesia, and put in danger the funding for the Michigan Donated Dental Services (DDS) program. The MDA thanks all the member dentists who took the time to respond to MDA legislative text alerts to urge legislators to maintain this important funding.

Work continues on other priorities

As a result of the budget battle, all other business before the Legislature came to a halt. This impacted several bills that the MDA was working on. However, that didn't mean nothing was being done. The MDA advocacy team used the time to meet with many legislators to educate them on our issues.

For example, the virtual credit card bill (Senate Bill 105) passed the state Senate the beginning of March but has sat in the House Insurance Committee since that time due to the in-fighting between the two chambers. The chair of the committee, Rep. Mike Harris (R-Waterford Twp.) has been very helpful in positioning the bill



for quick passage in the House when the logjam of bills breaks. Senate Bill 105 deals with the problem caused when insurance companies pay claims with virtual credit cards that charge a fee to the dentist in order to cash them. The bill requires insurance companies to offer one form of payment that pays the dentist 100% of the agreed-upon amount.

Bills dealing with the problem of non-licensed dental specialists advertising as specialists were introduced in June (House Bills 4593 and 4594). The MDA, along with the Michigan Council on Dental Specialties and the Michigan Association of Orthodontists, have been busy meeting with all the members of the House Health Policy committee to garner support for these bills. A committee hearing on the bill was expected sometime in October.

The MDA is also working with the Michigan Dental Hygienists' Association on implementation of the Dentist and Dental Hygiene Compact in Michigan. The bill to accomplish this is House Bill 4935, introduced in September. This bill would allow for greater portability of dental licenses between states — something that newer dentists have been asking for.

Finally, the MDA would like to thank all the members who participate in the meetings the MDA has with state legislators. These meetings do have an impact and have greatly assisted in MDA advocacy efforts. Likewise, thank you to all the members who attend political fundraisers that are paid for by MDA Dental PAC. Attending these events is so important in developing relationships that can impact MDA priorities.

COMMUNITY WATER FLUORIDATION

Fluoride Ban Proposed in St. Clair

St. Clair County continues to be in the news regarding a county-wide fluoride ban proposed by the county medical director.

This type of ban has not been attempted in Michigan previously, as local water authorities and communities typically have control. Dentists in the area are urged to be diligent in providing factual information to patients and community leaders. Talking points and patient handouts are available on the MDA website at michigandental.org/Fluoride.

Watch for updates on this story.

Compiled by MDA Legislative Staff. Questions? Contact Bill Sullivan, vice president of advocacy and professional relations, at bsullivan@michigandental.org.



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