

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

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SENATE BILL DRS15381-NL-127

Short Title: Increase Oral Health Care Access in NC. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Adcock, Burgin, and Corbin (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO INCREASE THE MEDICAID REIMBURSEMENT RATE FOR DENTAL
3 SERVICES.

4 Whereas, access to oral health care is a critical component of overall health; and

5 Whereas, thousands of North Carolinians, especially those insured through Medicaid,
6 face significant barriers to dental care; and

7 Whereas, a major contributing factor to the barriers to dental care is the low
8 participation rate among dental providers in the Medicaid program due to the State's insufficient
9 Medicaid reimbursement rates for dental services; and

10 Whereas, North Carolina's dental Medicaid reimbursement rates have not seen a
11 meaningful increase since 2008; and

12 Whereas, as a result, many dental providers opt out of the Medicaid program or stop
13 accepting Medicaid patients, which results in patients utilizing hospital emergency departments
14 for urgent dental needs; and

15 Whereas, raising the Medicaid reimbursement rates for dental services would
16 incentivize dental providers currently participating in the Medicaid program, encourage more
17 dental providers to enroll in the Medicaid program, expand access to preventive care, and reduce
18 costly emergency department visits; and

19 Whereas, an adequate network of Medicaid dental providers throughout the State is a
20 requirement of the Medicaid program; and

21 Whereas, while safety net dental providers provide the majority of oral health services
22 under the NC Medicaid program, they do not have the capacity, geographic distribution, or
23 financial ability to provide all of the necessary care; and

24 Whereas, a robust contingent of private practicing dentists must participate in the
25 Medicaid program to ensure an adequate network of providers to serve the NC Medicaid
26 beneficiaries; Now, therefore,

27 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

28 **SECTION 1.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of
29 Health and Human Services, Division of Health Benefits (DHB), the sum of eighty million
30 dollars (\$80,000,000) in recurring funds and associated receipts beginning in the 2026-2027
31 fiscal year to be used to increase the Medicaid rate paid for dental services.

32 **SECTION 2.** This act is effective July 1, 2026.

