

---

**SENATE BILL 5321**

---

**State of Washington**

**55th Legislature**

**1997 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Deccio, Thibaudeau, Wood, Fairley, Strannigan, Kohl, Oke and Winsley

Read first time 01/23/97. Referred to Committee on Health & Long-Term Care.

1 AN ACT Relating to improving access for oral health care services  
2 for rural and underserved populations; adding a new section to chapter  
3 43.70 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 70.185 RCW; adding a new  
4 section to chapter 28B.115 RCW; creating new sections; and making an  
5 appropriation.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that access to  
8 preventive and restorative oral health services by low-income families  
9 and eligible medicaid children is currently restricted by complex  
10 regulatory, financial, cultural, and geographic barriers that have  
11 resulted in a large number of children suffering unnecessarily from  
12 dental disease. The legislature also finds that very early exposure to  
13 oral health care can significantly reduce the incidence of dental  
14 disease and reverse it in many cases, thereby significantly reducing  
15 costs of providing dental services to low-income populations.

16 It is the intent of the legislature to provide access to oral  
17 health care services to medicaid eligible and low-income families and  
18 children and other dentally underserved populations by addressing some  
19 identified barriers.

1        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 2.**    A new section is added to chapter 43.70 RCW  
2 to read as follows:

3        (1) Within available funds, the department shall provide dental  
4 programs in all public health jurisdictions state-wide in order to  
5 improve access to oral health services for low-income families and  
6 currently underserved populations.

7        (2) Within available funds, public health jurisdictions shall:

8        (a) Develop and distribute educational information explaining good  
9 oral hygiene practices;

10       (b) Organize local oral health coalitions with representatives from  
11 both the dental and nondental communities whose mission is to raise  
12 awareness of the oral health needs of the community and to recruit  
13 local general and speciality dentists to serve medicaid and low-income  
14 families;

15       (c) Create an outreach program to target children who need oral  
16 health care services;

17       (d) Identify low-income school populations for expanded school-  
18 based sealant programs; and

19       (e) Promote the addition of fluoride to communities with public  
20 water systems serving over one thousand connections.

21       NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 3.**    The sum of three hundred thousand dollars,  
22 or as much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated for the  
23 biennium ending June 30, 1999, from the general fund to the department  
24 of health for the purpose of carrying out focused dental sealant  
25 programs in schools. The department of health shall: (1) Allocate the  
26 funds in the most cost-effective manner, consistent with local  
27 assessments of needs and community prevention efforts, and (2) take  
28 into account the best community resources available to perform the  
29 procedures, such as migrant community health clinics, tribal health  
30 clinics, or public health jurisdictions.

31       NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 4.**    The University of Washington school of  
32 dentistry's senior dental extern program, dental hygiene degree  
33 completion program, and graduate pediatric dental program shall  
34 continue to serve rural and underserved children through training  
35 programs at the Yakima valley farm workers clinic and Yakima  
36 neighborhood health services.

1        NEW SECTION.   **Sec. 5.**   A new section is added to chapter 70.185 RCW  
2 to read as follows:

3        The department shall utilize the available funds in the recruitment  
4 and retention program to target dentists and dental hygienists who wish  
5 to practice in remote and underserved areas of the state.

6        NEW SECTION.   **Sec. 6.**   A new section is added to chapter 28B.115  
7 RCW to read as follows:

8        The board shall target dentists and dental hygienists who wish to  
9 practice in remote and underserved areas of the state when allocating  
10 funds for the loan repayment and scholarship program.

--- END ---