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April 17, 2026

The Honorable Michael Rodrigues
Chair, Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Massachusetts Senate
State House, Room 212
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chairman Rodrigues,

On behalf of the Massachusetts Dental Society (MDS), our more than 5,000 member dentists statewide, and the patients they serve, we respectfully urge you and the Senate Committee on Ways and Means to increase the annual MassHealth adult dental benefit cap from the House budget of **\$1,750 to \$2,000**. We also ask that **preventive care, dentures, extractions, and medically or dentally necessary services remain excluded from the cap**.

As the Senate prepares its FY2027 budget proposal, we recognize the significant fiscal pressures facing the Commonwealth. At the same time, we want to highlight that protecting funding for the MassHealth Dental Program is essential to maintaining access to care and controlling long-term health care costs.

Massachusetts has direct experience with the consequences of reducing adult dental benefits. Following significant cuts in 2010, approximately 100,000 fewer adults received dental services through the MassHealth program. Access to routine and restorative care declined; dentist participation decreased, and untreated dental disease increasingly led to avoidable emergency department visits—an inefficient and costly setting for care. These outcomes could have been prevented with more adequate funding

Despite partial restoration of benefits in subsequent years, the Commonwealth has not fully recovered from the cumulative impacts of earlier reductions, and significant unmet oral health needs remain. Renewed limitations risk repeating past mistakes, worsening oral health disparities, and shifting costs to more expensive and less effective care settings.

A higher annual cap is necessary to reflect the true cost of basic restorative dental care and rising practice expenses. A cap set too low will be exhausted before treatment is completed, forcing patients to delay or forgo care. This increases the likelihood of more serious and costly dental and medical complications. Raising the cap to **\$2,000 and adding exemptions** would improve access to timely, comprehensive care, support better oral and overall health outcomes, and help sustain provider networks in MassHealth.

Thank you for your leadership and thoughtful consideration of this matter. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this proposal and to serve as a resource as the Senate continues its budget deliberations.

Respectfully,

Steven Spitz, DMD

President

Massachusetts Dental Society