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January 20, 2026

Governor Maura Healey
Massachusetts State House, 24 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Governor Healey,

On behalf of the Massachusetts Dental Society (MDS) and our statewide membership of dentists of over 5000 dentists, committed to improving oral health for all residents of the Commonwealth, I want to thank you for your leadership and continued dedication to healthcare access in Massachusetts. In today's climate, which is constantly changing, the leadership job is challenging. You have proved that when you stick to your core beliefs of helping people, we can have a positive, productive, and healthy society.

As you prepare to file your FY2027 budget proposal, we recognize the significant fiscal pressures facing the Commonwealth and the difficult choices that accompany them. At the same time, we respectfully urge you to protect funding for the MassHealth Dental Program and avoid any reductions to adult dental benefits. We know that good oral health leads to good overall health. Massachusetts has direct and well-documented experience with the consequences of cutting adult dental coverage.

When MassHealth adult dental benefits were significantly reduced in 2010, approximately 100,000 fewer adults received dental services through the program. Access to preventive and restorative care declined sharply, and many beneficiaries were unable to obtain needed treatment due to benefit limitations. As a result, dentist participation in MassHealth decreased, and access to routine dental care for vulnerable adults deteriorated across the Commonwealth. This access gap led to worse oral health outcomes and higher costs elsewhere in the healthcare system. Untreated dental disease increasingly resulted in avoidable emergency department visits—settings that are costly and unable to provide definitive dental care. This was all preventable.

Dentists and oral health professionals across Massachusetts have consistently raised concerns that renewed cuts to MassHealth dental benefits would once again reduce access to care, exacerbate oral health disparities, and shift costs to more expensive and less effective care settings. Although some benefits were restored in subsequent years, the Commonwealth has never fully recovered from the cumulative impact of those earlier reductions, and significant unmet oral health needs remain. Any cuts to MassHealth dental funding in FY2027 would risk repeating these same mistakes and compounding prior harm.

The Massachusetts Dental Society strongly believes that oral health is an essential component of overall health and that protecting access to dental care is both a public

health and fiscal imperative. We truly urge that you preserve the MassHealth Dental Program in your FY2027 budget proposal.

Thank you for your continued leadership and for your commitment to the health and well-being of Massachusetts residents. We stand ready to work with your administration and the Legislature to ensure sustainable access to oral healthcare for those who need it most.

Respectfully,

Steven Spitz, DMD

President
Massachusetts Dental Society