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The Honorable Aaron Michlewitz
Chair, House Committee on Ways and Means
Massachusetts House of Representatives
State House
Boston, MA 02133

March 5, 2026

Dear Chairman Michlewitz,

On behalf of the Massachusetts Dental Society (MDS) and our statewide membership of dentists of over 5000 dentists and the patients we serve, I write to respectfully urge you and the House Committee on Ways and Means to reconsider the provision in the Governor's proposed budget that places a \$1,000 annual cap on adult dental benefits under MassHealth (Outside Section 78 - MassHealth and Health Safety Net Dental Services)

As the House of Representatives prepares to file their 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.

Massachusetts has long been recognized as a national leader in health care access and innovation. The restoration of comprehensive adult dental benefits in recent years represented a meaningful step forward in promoting equity and preventive care. Reversing that progress through an annual spending cap risks undermining the Commonwealth's commitment to whole-person health and disproportionately impacting our most vulnerable residents.

We respectfully ask that you consider maintaining comprehensive adult dental coverage within MassHealth and reject the proposed \$1,000 cap. Preserving access to preventive and restorative oral health services is not only compassionate policy—it is fiscally responsible policy that helps avoid more expensive medical interventions down the line.

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

Respectfully,

Steven Spitz, DMD

**President
Massachusetts Dental Society**