

1 WHEREAS, routine and preventive dental care is important to a person's overall
2 health, and many states have found that investing in preventive dental care for Medicaid
3 enrollees saves public dollars on a net cost basis by preventing emergency room visits and
4 expensive, complicated treatments arising from neglect of oral health; and

5 WHEREAS, policymakers in Louisiana have heretofore overlooked the necessity of
6 providing dental coverage for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, a cause
7 for which advocates for this population have been fighting for many years; and

8 WHEREAS, neglecting the oral health of persons with intellectual and
9 developmental disabilities leads to avoidable expenditures of public funding in the form of
10 hospitalizations and oral and maxillofacial surgeries; in the case of adult ICF/ID residents,
11 Louisiana Medicaid will cover such expensive treatments, but not the lower-cost routine care
12 that would prevent those expensive treatments from becoming necessary; and

13 WHEREAS, policymakers should consider not only the cost impact of continuing
14 to deny Medicaid coverage for routine dental care for adult ICF/ID residents, but also the
15 pain that these persons endure, often without the capacity to understand or communicate
16 verbally about their condition, and the hardships that their family members and other
17 caregivers go through when they have to be hospitalized or have oral surgery due to a
18 preventable oral health condition; and

19 WHEREAS, House Bill No. 172 of the 2021 Regular Session of the Legislature (HB
20 172) has proposed to institute a dental coverage requirement in the state Medicaid program
21 for all persons of age twenty-one or older who are either enrolled in a Medicaid waiver
22 program for persons with developmental or intellectual disabilities or reside in an ICF/ID
23 facility; and

24 WHEREAS, the Louisiana Department of Health administers the Medicaid program
25 of this state; and

26 WHEREAS, the department has indicated that if funding is available, it could
27 provide Medicaid dental coverage for adult waiver program enrollees as proposed in HB
28 172; but that, even with funding availability, it could not provide the same coverage to
29 ICF/ID residents due to limitations relating to the way that per diem payments to these
30 facilities are structured.

1 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby
2 urge and request the Louisiana Department of Health to study potential means of financing
3 dental care for adult residents of intermediate care facilities for persons with intellectual and
4 developmental disabilities.

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Louisiana Department of Health shall report
6 findings of the study called for in this Resolution to the House Committee on
7 Appropriations, the Senate Committee on Finance, the House Committee on Health and
8 Welfare, and the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare no later than sixty days prior to
9 the convening of the 2022 Regular Session of the Legislature of Louisiana.

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the
11 secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health.

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

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2021 Regular Session

Butler

Urges and requests the La. Department of Health (LDH) to study potential means of financing dental care for adult residents of intermediate care facilities for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Requires LDH to report findings of the study to the House Committee on Appropriations, the Senate Committee on Finance, and the legislative committees on health and welfare no later than 60 days prior to the convening of the 2022 R.S.