



STATE OF DELAWARE
STATE COUNCIL FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

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August 19, 2010

The Honorable Michael N. Castle
1233 Longworth House Building
Washington D.C. 20515

RE: Special Care Dentistry Act of 2010 [H.R. 5364]

Dear Congressman Castle:

I write on behalf of the State Council for Persons with Disabilities (SCPD) to encourage you to endorse and become a co-sponsor of the Special Care Dentistry Act of 2010. H.R. 5364 amends Title XIX (Medicaid) of the Social Security Act to require states to provide oral health coverage for individuals with disabilities and the elderly through a separate state adult dental program. SCPD is actively involved in this issue through the Alliance on Oral Health Care for Individuals with Disabilities and has the following observations.

Research on dental health suggests that poor oral health is linked to increased risks for chronic health conditions such as heart disease and diabetes. This problem is even more pronounced among individuals with disabilities because of their notoriously limited access to dental care. A survey conducted on the health status of individuals with disabilities in Delaware showed that almost a quarter (24.3%) of adults surveyed did not receive regular dental care. While Delaware offers a good Medicaid program to meet the needs of children who qualify, virtually no assistance is available to adults with unmet dental needs. Nationally, as of 2009, only 9 states provided basic oral health services through Medicaid.

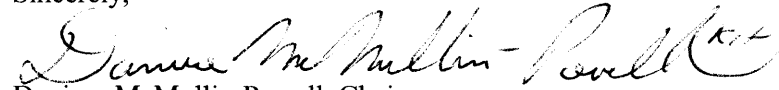
Individuals with disabilities often face multiple difficulties in attempting to receive appropriate dental care. Recent studies have shown that one's knowledge of dental care is a major predictor of dental health. Patients with cognitive disabilities are often dependent on others for assistance, whether for transportation, home care activities, decision-making about treatment, and/or payment. Physical disabilities can limit a person's ability to practice effective dental hygiene and physically access adequate care in a dental office. Many people with disabilities face oral health infections with no hope of receiving access to even basic dental care.

SCPD respectfully requests your support of H.R. 5362 and encourages you to co-sponsor the proposed legislation. Providing appropriate and necessary oral health benefits to individuals with

disabilities under Medicaid would prevent unnecessary emergency room visits, hospitalizations, institutionalization, and reduce downstream medical costs.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Daniese McMullin-Powell".

Daniese McMullin-Powell, Chairperson
State Council for Persons with Disabilities

Cc: Developmental Disabilities Council
Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens
Hr5364 dentistry castle 8-10