

# SENATE NO. 1217

## **AN ACT** TO IMPROVE, PROMOTE AND PROTECT THE ORAL HEALTH OF THE COMMONWEALTH

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled,  
And by the authority of the same, as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 111 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after section 25I the  
2 following two sections:–

3 Section 25J (a) In order to improve, promote and protect the oral health of all residents of the  
4 Commonwealth, a full-time dental director shall be located in the executive office of health and human  
5 services and shall work collaboratively with the department of public health to facilitate integration of  
6 programs to improve oral health. The director shall be funded through an interagency agreement  
7 between the executive office of health and human services and the department of public health.

8 (b) The full-time dental director shall be a Massachusetts licensed dentist with public health  
9 experience and shall oversee the MassHealth dental program and work in collaboration with the office  
10 of oral health within the Massachusetts department of public health on dental public health programs  
11 for MassHealth recipients to increase access, oral health prevention activities, and other initiatives to  
12 address oral health disparities, including but not limited to workforce shortages.

13 Section 1 (a) The department shall have an office of oral health with responsibility for the  
14 following, though not limited to, oral public health activities:

- 15 (1) Provide recommendations and guidance to the department and other state  
16 departments, agencies, community providers, the legislature and others for preventing  
17 oral diseases of all Massachusetts residents and for improving, promoting and  
18 protecting the oral health of state residents with a focus on underserved populations  
19 and reducing oral health disparities;
- 20 (2) Surveillance, study and appraisal of the state's oral health needs and resources;
- 21 (3) Foster the development, expansion and evaluation of oral health services for residents  
22 of the state in collaboration with key state partners, including but not limited to other  
23 executive office of health and human services agencies and departments, including  
24 but not limited to MassHealth, department of youth services; department of social  
25 services; department of mental retardation, department of mental health and the  
26 executive office of elderly affairs; board of registration in dentistry; and other public  
27 agencies including but not limited to department of education and department of early  
28 education and care;
- 29 (4) Provide information and education concerning oral health to the dental and health  
30 community and public;
- 31 (5) Promote and provide technical assistance, monitoring and evaluation of population-  
32 based dental programs, such as community water fluoridation and school prevention  
33 programs and mobile and portable dental programs, as well as other programs to  
34 improve access to services;
- 35 (6) Policy development to promote the public's oral health; and
- 36 (7) Other related programs, policies and preventive measures that impact oral health.

37 (b) Subject to appropriation, the office of oral health shall have the following staff and  
38 resources in order to fully implement the above mentioned activities:

39 (1) 1 full time equivalent of director of the office of oral health within the Massachusetts  
40 department of public health to coordinate activities, including but not limited to the  
41 ones outlined above. This person shall be a licensed dental professional with a  
42 public health advanced degree.

43 (2) 1 full time equivalent of a fluoridation engineer who will conduct assessments of all  
44 existing fluoridation equipment and recommend upgrades and who will provide  
45 surveillance of existing fluoridation systems. This position shall be located in the  
46 division of environmental protection and shall work collaboratively with the office of  
47 oral health and shall be funded through an interagency agreement with the division of  
48 environmental protection.

49 (3) 1 full time equivalent of administrative assistant for the office of oral health to carry  
50 out administrative duties and data entry.

51 (4) 2 full time equivalent program specialists to support public health programs that  
52 focus on oral health in underserved populations including but not limited to the issues  
53 of elders and other underserved populations and prevention and access to care  
54 programs, such as mobile and portable oral health programs and community health  
55 centers.

56 (5) Funding for the promotion and implementation of fluoridation in Massachusetts  
57 communities that are not currently fluoridated or to upgrade current fluoridation  
58 equipment. Funds remaining after allocation for implementation of fluoridation and

59 upgrading current fluoridation equipment shall be used to support community-based  
60 oral health prevention programs.

61 SECTION 25K. The office of oral health shall evaluate programs and develop quality assurance  
62 activities, including but not limited to, an update on progress to date on the recommendations of the  
63 2000 report of the special legislative commission on oral health. The update shall be delivered to the  
64 house and senate chairs of the joint committee on public health on or before May 1, 2008.