

RELEASE: SUNUNU AND HOUSE REPUBLICANS REJECT PROVIDING DENTAL BENEFIT TO ADULTS ON MEDICAID

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Wed 9/16/2020 11:02 AM



New Hampshire House of Representatives
Concord, New Hampshire
House Majority Office

PRESS RELEASE

Date: September 16, 2020

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SUNUNU AND HOUSE REPUBLICANS REJECT PROVIDING DENTAL BENEFIT TO ADULTS ON MEDICAID

CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE –Today, the New Hampshire House voted 194-146 to sustain Governor Sununu’s veto of HB 250 which would require the Department of Health and Human Services to contract to provide a dental benefit to adults on Medicaid. **Representative Jennifer Bernet (D-Wilton), legislative leader on the Medicaid Dental Benefit policy** released the following statement:

“It is disappointing that House Republicans chose to sustain the Governor’s veto on an issue that would have given approximately 1 in 10 adults in New Hampshire who rely on Medicaid access to preventative dental care. In his veto message, the Governor cites that the cost to implement this policy was too great for New Hampshire to bare, however the cost in sustaining this veto is arguably much greater. Lack of access to preventative dental care can lead to chronic health issues including heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and adverse pregnancy outcomes. New Hampshire spends approximately \$2.2 billion on Medicaid, including over \$242 million (11%) on emergency room and hospital costs much of which could be prevented with adequate care across the board. Providing dental coverage to Medicaid recipients in New Hampshire could both save the state money and Granite Staters the cost to their health and sometimes their lives.”

“With rising unemployment numbers due to COVID-19 layoffs and the probability that more Granite State adults will lack access to their employer’s health insurance coverage and may rely on Medicaid, providing dental coverage is critical to maintaining public health. The emergency room is not a substitute for primary care and should not be the first time that a person in New Hampshire seeks care for a host of serious health issues because they cannot afford to pay out of pocket costs to see a dentist routinely.”