

Date: March 5, 2025

To: Senate Ways and Means Committee

From: Nick Rogers D.D.S.

I have three considerations for the Senate Ways and Means Committee to consider.

**1) Support a \$16.9 million from SGF in order to raise the dental reimbursement rates to near commercial rates.**

My name is Nick Rogers and I am a practicing general dentist in Arkansas City. I have practiced in Arkansas City since 1979 and my current practice has four dentists. My practice has always accepted Medicaid as payment for dental procedures to children (under 21 years of age) and special health care needs patients, regardless of their age that live in Cowley County. For those adult special needs patients that live outside Cowley County, Medicaid is not accepted as a form of payment due to the low reimbursement rate from Medicaid.

We do not accept Medicaid as payment for any adult Medicaid patients regardless of where they live, again due to inadequate reimbursement rates. In short, our office is one of the 13% of offices that accept more than 100 Medicaid patients. Our office actually has greater than 2,000 patients with Medicaid.

Cowley County has two large groups of persons that rely on Medicaid for their dental needs. One of those groups are young children with a high rate of cavities from lower socio-economic households that rely on Medicaid for their dental needs. USD 470 has over 70% of its children on free and reduced lunch program which correlates to the percentage of children relying on Medicaid for their dental needs and a population that is at high risk for cavities.

The other group are persons of all ages with special needs in which Cowley County has a disproportionately large group due to the closure of the Winfield State Hospital in 1996 as a result of the Kansas Developmental Disability Act of 1995. Until two years ago, adult persons with special needs had no dental coverage. Now that Kansas provides adult dental benefits, they have dental coverage, but virtually no dentists that will accept them as patients due to the poor Medicaid reimbursement rates for dental services.

Being a small business, it is very difficult to work with third party payers, whether they be public or private, that do not meet overhead. My willingness to accept Medicaid for children and special needs patients within my community is not done as a business model, but as a responsibility to my community and a mission to help those persons with special needs. My practice cannot afford to accept adult Medicaid patients with dental benefits. The monies generated by my practice from the private payers cannot absorb any more additional losses that are incurred from a third-party public payer that does not at least meet overhead.

As the number of children with Medicaid continues to increase and the overhead costs of our office operations increases, we have considered limiting the number of Medicaid patients that our office will accept. I am therefore asking you to support a \$16.9 million from SGF to increase the dental reimbursement comparable to our neighboring states which are in most cases, is double to those paid in Kansas.

**2) Request in Funding of the Donated Dental Services Program to \$125,000**

Our practice also participates in the Kansas Donated Dental (DDS) Program which provides Kansans with disabilities or who are elderly or medically fragile dental care. We are three of the 320 Kansas dentists along with 46 dental labs that participate in this program. Our office has been recognized for their contribution to the DDS program. On average, we provide free dental treatment for 3-5 patients per year with the help of this program. I am also asking you to consider increasing funding to this program to \$125,000 to cover the costs of this program.

**3) Increase funding by \$1.3 million in order to raise the CPT G0330 code**

A large part of my practice is hospital dentistry. This is due to the fragile patients that I provide dental treatment, children under 3 years of age and special needs patients, that requires dental treatment to be provided in a hospital setting with general anesthesia. Access to surgery rooms, both within Kansas and nationally, for dental procedures is becoming more difficult for the dental community due to inadequate facility fee reimbursement. In general, dental procedures performed within surgery rooms takes more time than many medical procedures. Also, in the case of the special needs patients that require hospitalization to obtain dental treatment, more staff is necessary than most other medical procedures. The hospital now receives approximately \$1722 as a facility fee. That is considerable less than the hospital receives in facility fees for many medical procedures that take far less time and less personnel. I am therefore requesting that you consider an increase in funding of \$1.3 million SGF in order to raise the CPT G0330 code reimbursement for facility services for dental procedures that require monitored anesthesia in an operating room setting to \$3,087.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Nick Rogers, D.D.S.