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**HOUSE BILL 2522**

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**State of Washington**

**69th Legislature**

**2026 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Thai, Valdez, Parshley, Ormsby, Donaghy, Fosse, and Callan

Read first time 01/16/26. Referred to Committee on Health Care & Wellness.

1 AN ACT Relating to advancing oral health equity and protecting  
2 access to preventive dental care amid federal and private sector  
3 coverage restrictions; adding a new section to chapter 48.43 RCW; and  
4 creating a new section.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that:

7 (a) Access to preventive dental care is essential to maintaining  
8 oral health and overall health and preventing the progression of oral  
9 disease that requires more invasive, costly treatment;

10 (b) Untreated oral health issues are strongly linked to systemic  
11 health conditions, such as diabetes, early-onset Alzheimer's,  
12 cardiovascular disease, pregnancy complications, and respiratory  
13 illness. By improving access to early preventive intervention,  
14 progression of these chronic conditions can be mitigated, and the  
15 long-term health of Washington patients is improved; and

16 (c) Recent federal actions propose removing or restricting  
17 fluoride, including the federal food and drug administration's  
18 consideration of pulling ingestible fluoride supplements for children  
19 and efforts to scale back community water fluoridation. National  
20 dental leaders from the American dental association and the American  
21 academy of pediatric dentistry have warned that such policies would

1 unravel decades of public health progress and disproportionately harm  
2 vulnerable populations. Yet, at the same time these federal actions  
3 are being considered, some dental benefit carriers continue to impose  
4 age, frequency, and other limitations on coverage for preventive  
5 dental care even when patient benefit dollars remain available. These  
6 combined federal and private sector actions create unnecessary  
7 barriers to essential preventive dental services, such as fluoride  
8 application, placement of sealants, and oral cancer screenings.

9 (2) Therefore, the legislature seeks to improve access to  
10 preventive dental care by requiring carriers to cover preventive  
11 dental services, regardless of age or other limitation, to promote  
12 the prevention of oral disease as well as improve equity and systemic  
13 health.

14 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 48.43  
15 RCW to read as follows:

16 (1) The treating dentist, in consultation with the covered  
17 person, shall determine preventive dental services that are medically  
18 necessary and appropriate, consistent with, or not to exceed, the  
19 established, or recognized, standard of care. A health carrier  
20 offering a dental only plan may not restrict or override such  
21 determinations by imposing age restrictions or frequency limitations.

22 (2) When a health carrier offering a dental only plan requires an  
23 adjunctive service for reimbursement of a separate preventive dental  
24 service, the health carrier must reimburse the provider for both  
25 services provided.

26 (3) For purposes of this section:

27 (a) "Health carrier," in addition to the definition in RCW  
28 48.43.005, also includes health care service contractors, limited  
29 health care service contractors, and disability insurers offering  
30 dental only coverage; and

31 (b) "Preventive dental services" includes dental prophylaxis,  
32 application of fluoride varnish, placement of sealants, oral hygiene  
33 instruction, application of silver diamine fluoride, application of  
34 nano-hydroxyapatite, preventive resin restoration, and oral cancer  
35 screenings.

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