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Florida Dental Association Applauds Signing of Dental Care Access Legislation

This week, Gov. Ron DeSantis signed into law HB 843, which will reestablish a dental student loan repayment program for dentists who practice as Medicaid providers serving low-income patients in designated rural and underserved areas.

“This legislation helps provide a platform to improving oral health, and resulting overall health, for all Floridians, by encouraging dentists to practice in areas where they are needed most,” said Dr. Jolene Paramore, president of the Florida Dental Association (FDA).

Florida is one of only five states without a dental student loan repayment program. Participating dentists may receive up to \$50,000 a year to help repay their loans and can serve in the program for up to five years. This program could be implemented within six months with appropriate funding from the state, and in five years, 10 participating dentists would be able to treat at least one million Floridians.

This law also will expand Florida’s Donated Dental Services program, which recruits volunteer dentists and dental labs to provide free comprehensive treatment to people who are disabled, elderly or medically compromised, and are unable to afford dental care. Oral health is critical to maintaining overall health, particularly for individuals managing chronic diseases or conditions, or undergoing critical medical procedures or treatments.

“The solutions brought forward in this legislation will provide immediate restorative care and relief from dental pain and ensure that all Floridians have access to the highest standard of dental care,” said Dr. Paramore. “The Florida Dental Association thanks the Florida Legislature for their passage of this bill and Gov. DeSantis for his support in signing this important legislation into law.”

Letters of support for HB 843 were sent to the governor from numerous dentists, dental students and patient and advocacy groups.

About the Florida Dental Association

As the state's premier professional organization representing Florida-licensed dentists, the Florida Dental Association (FDA) serves as Florida's advocate for oral health. A constituent society of the American Dental Association, the FDA was established in 1884 to ensure patients receive the highest quality of care from dental professionals. The FDA is the leading expert and advocate on issues affecting Florida dentists and the oral health of Floridians. To learn more, visit floridadental.org.