



Communicating Two Cents for Tooth Sense™ to Elected Officials

Effective in-person, telephone, written and e-mail communications by concerned citizens can help educate elected officials on the need to increase dental Medicaid (MA) reimbursements to the 75th percentile of the most recent American Dental Association fee survey for this region of the country and the Two Cents for Tooth Sense™ (Tooth Cents™) funding proposal.

Telephone Calls – Phone calls are generally taken by a legislative staff member.

- Ask to speak with the aide who handles the dental MA issue.
- Identify yourself. Tell the aide you want to leave a brief message, such as: “Please tell Senator/Representative (NAME) I support increasing dental MA reimbursement rates.” Inform them of a bill being co-authored by Sen. Mark Miller (D-Monona) and Rep. Garey Bies (R-Sister Bay) and Rep. Josh Zepnick (D-Milwaukee) that would impose a fee on soda to fund this rate increase.
- Briefly explain your support and ask for your senator’s/representative’s position on increasing dental MA reimbursement rates. You may also request a written response.

Written Letters/E-Mails – These are the most popular methods for communicating with legislators.

- State in the first paragraph that you are writing in support of increasing dental MA reimbursement rates through the Two Cents for Tooth Sense™ dental MA proposal co-authored by Sen. Mark Miller (D-Monona) and Rep. Garey Bies (R-Sister Bay) and Rep. Josh Zepnick (D-Milwaukee). Specific Tooth Cents™ legislation has not yet been introduced in the 2007 legislature, so speak generically of the proposal. Once a proposal is introduced, correspondence should identify it accordingly (Assembly Bill: AB ___; Senate Bill: SB___).
- Be courteous, but to the point.
- Include key information and personal examples about how you believe increasing dental MA rates will positively impact constituents in his/her Senate or Assembly district.
- Address only the dental MA issue in the letter. Ask for your senator’s/representative’s position on increasing reimbursement rates or on the Tooth Cents™ proposal. You may also request a written response.
- Keep the letter to one page, if possible.

In-Person Meetings – One-on-one conversations with elected officials, even if only a few minutes in length, provide a special opportunity for putting a name and face with an issue.

- Wear your “I Support Two Cents for Tooth Sense™ - Do You?” button to public hearings, community meetings, political gatherings and special events where elected officials are expected.
- Schedule a visit to your legislators’ Capitol offices. They are usually in Madison Tuesdays through Thursdays when the Legislature is in session.
- Quickly convey your desire to see this problem solved in a manner that gives all children and adults access to quality oral health care.
- Remain calm and stay positive. Emphasize the importance of all parties working together toward a meaningful solution - address the problem, but don’t dwell on it.
- If legislators ask a question you don’t have the answer to – be honest. Say you don’t know, but you will get back to them. Then, call Wisconsin Dental Association Director of Government Services Mara Brooks at 608-250-3442 or mbrooks@wda.org and ask for assistance in responding to the question.
- Follow-up with a written note or telephone call thanking the legislator for his/her time and openness to increasing dental MA reimbursement rates and/or the Tooth Cents™ proposal. Ask for his/her position on both. You may also request a written response.

Contact Information – Wisconsin legislators’ contact information is available by calling 800-362-9472 or online at <http://165.189.139.210/WAML/>.