Sixty-fourth Legislative Assembly of North Dakota
In Regular Session Commencing Tuesday, January 6, 2015

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 4004
(Legislative Management)
(Health Services Committee)

A concurrent resolution directing the Legislative Management to continue to study dental services in the state, including the effectiveness of case management services and the state infrastructure necessary to cost effectively use mid-level providers to improve access to services and address dental service provider shortages in underserved areas of the state.

WHEREAS, the 2013-14 interim Health Services Committee studied how to improve access to dental services and ways to address dental service provider shortages; and

WHEREAS, oral health professionals are located mostly in urban areas of the state, resulting in a shortage of providers in rural areas of the state; and

WHEREAS, access to dental care is limited for Medicaid-eligible children, rural residents, low-income adults, the elderly, especially those in nursing homes, and Native Americans; and

WHEREAS, emergency room visits for preventable dental conditions result in unnecessary costs to the state and hospitals; and

WHEREAS, the 2013-14 interim Health Services Committee learned case management services may have the potential to reduce dental costs and improve access to services; and

WHEREAS, the 2013-14 interim Health Services Committee received a report on the early impacts of dental therapists in Minnesota prepared by the Minnesota Department of Health and Minnesota Board of Dentistry for the Minnesota Legislature in 2014 indicating mid-level providers serve more patients enrolled in public health insurance programs and some patients served in clinics employing dental therapists experienced reduced wait times and travel times with no quality or safety concerns; and

WHEREAS, the North Dakota Oral Health Coalition recommends the following oral health initiatives:

- Expansion of the Seal! ND Program through the State Department of Health oral health programs to target low income children at public schools;
- Additional funding for dental safety-net clinics to include mobile, nonprofit and federally qualified health centers;
- Funding for a case management outreach model supported through the State Department of Health and the North Dakota Dental Association;
- Expansion of duties for dental assistants and hygienists through innovative, non-traditional, outreach education programs to minimize geographic and employment barriers for the current workforce; and

WHEREAS, a report by the North Dakota Center for Rural Health regarding an assessment of the oral health needs in the state and proposed interventions to reduce need identified the following priorities models:

- Increase funding and reach of safety-net clinics to include services provided in western North Dakota using selected models;

- Increased funding and reach of the Seal! North Dakota Program--to include using dental hygienists to provide care and incorporating case management and identification of a dental home;
- Expand scope of dental hygienists and utilize dental hygienists at the top of their current scope of work to provide community based preventive and restorative services and education among populations of high need;
- Create a system to promote dentistry professions among state residents and encourage practice in North Dakota through a consolidated loan repayment program and access to schools of dentistry;
- Increase Medicaid reimbursement; and

WHEREAS, the 2013-14 interim Health Services Committee determined additional information was needed regarding the effectiveness of case management services and the state infrastructure necessary to cost effectively utilize mid-level providers to improve access to services and address dental service provider shortages in underserved areas of the state;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF NORTH DAKOTA, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN:

That the Legislative Management continue to study dental services in the state, including the effectiveness of case management services and the state infrastructure necessary to cost effectively utilize mid-level providers to improve access to services and address dental service provider shortages in underserved areas of the state; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Legislative Management report its findings and recommendations, together with any legislation required to implement the recommendations, to the Sixty-fifth Legislative Assembly.

President of the Senate

Speaker of the House

Secretary of the Senate

Chief Clerk of the House

Filed in this office this 19th day of March, 2015,

at 2:29 o'clock P. M.

Secretary of State