

Brenda Akers

Testimony in Support of LD 1230

April 11, 2013

Good afternoon members of the Committee on Labor, Commerce, Research and Economic Development. My name is Brenda Akers and I live in Lewiston. I'm standing before you today in pain from broken teeth. Right now I am in between jobs and my son and I have no health insurance. I'm in the process of applying for MaineCare for both of us.

I did have MaineCare in the past and appreciated that assistance when I needed it, but admit that it wasn't easy to find a dentist when I had it. I know all it will cover are extractions, and only if there is severe pain. I was actually told by a dentist once, that they wouldn't fill and save a tooth because the pain wasn't bad enough. (At the time, I was using cloves to manage the pain.) Two weeks later, an oral surgeon had to pull the tooth. I haven't tried the dental clinic for this current problem because I still owe them almost \$200 from that office visit in which I was refused care.

Even though I take good care of my teeth using the special toothpaste recommended by a dentist, the enamel is wearing away, and for the past several years, I've lose at least one tooth each year. If I could get cleanings and have my cavities filled, I would not be losing these teeth.

When I have a dental issue, it affects what I can eat, gives me bad headaches, stops me from sleeping well, and prevents me from keeping up with all that I have to do. Right now, I'm looking for work and in the process of moving. The pain and other side effects are getting in the way of both of these.

I believe this proposal to allow licensed dental hygiene therapists to help dentists who are willing to treat people like me, see more people and do more procedures and would be of great help to me and other low income people in need of care. Please support this bill.