



NC Dental Society Legislative Priorities

The following legislative priorities were approved by the NCDS Board of Trustees on 1/17/2025 for the 2025/2026 legislative biennium

Prevent Non-Dentist Ownership of Dental Practices in North Carolina – Maintain current language in the dental practice act which states only a licensed dentist can own, operate, or control a dental practice and make clinical decisions regarding patient care. Prevent any changes to the dental practice act that would allow non-dentists (including private equity firms) to own dental practices as a matter of patient safety and provider protection – as this would open the door for non-dentists to drive decision making regarding patient care and potential provider liability. Maintain the dental board's authority to review management arrangements (contracts) between dental management companies and dental practices to ensure non-dentists cannot establish ownership of dental practices in conflict with the current dental practice act.

Increase Medicaid Reimbursement Rates – Work with the NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) to increase Medicaid reimbursement rates paid to dental providers. Solidify support for this proposal amongst NCDHHS leadership. Strategically work to incorporate this proposal into the Governor's budget request and also strategically advocate for the NC General Assembly to include this proposal into the finalized state budget.

- **NCDS Public Affairs Campaign:** Educate the public, providers, state agency staff, and elected officials on the need to increase Medicaid reimbursement rates paid to dental providers in order to improve access to quality dental care in North Carolina.
- **Managed Care:** Support the continued exclusion of dentistry from managed care.

Dental Practice Act Changes – advocate for the following changes to the dental practice act in North Carolina

- **Health Information Exchange (HIE)** – make dentist connection to HIE voluntary instead of mandatory.
- **Faculty Licensure** – put extra guidelines in place for foreign-trained dentists. Currently, a dentist trained outside of the U.S. is allowed to practice once they achieve an instructor's license. Under the proposed change, a foreign-trained dentist could practice only if they have been approved under credentialing standards of an accredited dental school and have been affiliated with that school for at least three years.
- **Manikin Exam Option** – allow individuals seeking licensure as dentists to prove their clinical skills on manikins, in addition to human subjects.
- **Mental Health and Substance Abuse Examinations** – allow any medical, mental health, or substance abuse exam investigations mandated by the dental board to remain private and confidential. The dental board already has the authority to mandate such exams, but this provision would keep it out of the court system.

Workforce – Support community college establishment and or expansion of dental workforce programs – including for dental auxiliaries, dental assistants, and dental hygienists in an effort to improve workforce shortage issues within the dental profession.

Fluoride – Support the use of community water fluoridation as a safe, effective, cost-saving, and socially equitable way to prevent tooth decay in children and adults.

NC Missions of Mercy (NC MOM) Funding – Change 200K budget provision from non-recurring to recurring in the state budget.