



## **House Bill 1248 (Villarreal): Expand Public/Private Dental Sealant Programs**

**What does House Bill 1248 do?** HB 1248 allows dentists to be eligible for Medicaid reimbursements when applying dental sealants at low-income public schools with full parental permission and consent.

**What problem is being fixed?** Current law requires that parents be physically present for the application of Medicaid-funded dental sealants. As a result, the children of working parents are very difficult to serve with school-based dental sealant programs. HB 1248 will enhance partnerships between city and county health authorities, nonprofits and foundations providing dental services, and public schools.

**Does HB 1248 change who can apply sealants?** NO. HB 1248 has no impact on the scope of practice for dentists in Texas. The bill is simply an effort to ensure that more dentists can provide dental sealants via successful public/private dental programs.

**Does HB 1248 cost money?** NO. HB 1248 is revenue neutral and will actually make state money go farther by creating an incentive for private providers and foundations to partner with the state to serve more children with existing dental resources.

### **What does the research say about school-based sealant programs?**

- **Dental sealants prevent cavities.** According to the *Journal of the American Dental Association*, “The evidence supports recommendations to seal sound surfaces and noncavitated lesions, to use visual assessment to detect surface cavitation, to use a toothbrush or handpiece prophylaxis to clean tooth surfaces, and to provide sealants to children even if follow-up cannot be ensured.”
- **Dental sealants save money.** Sealants are a cost effective way of preventing cavities and reducing future costs. Sealants cost less than one-third of a filling.
- **School-based sealant programs work best for low-income children.** According to the *Journal of the American Dental Association*, “School sealant programs can be an important intervention to increase the receipt of sealants, especially among underserved children. Furthermore, sealant programs could reduce or eliminate racial and economic disparities in sealant use if programs were provided to all eligible, high-risk schools, such as those in which 50 percent or more of the children are eligible for free or reduced-price meals.”

### **For more information, please contact:**

Jason Sabo, Senior Vice President for Public Policy  
United Ways of Texas

[Jason.sabo@uwtexas.org](mailto:Jason.sabo@uwtexas.org)

512.450.2125