



POLK COUNTY DENTAL ASSOCIATION

AN AFFILIATE OF THE WEST COAST DISTRICT,
AMERICAN & FLORIDA DENTAL ASSOCIATIONS

Polk County Dental Association
LEGISLATIVE ISSUES
Representative Colleen Burton
Tuesday, October 26, 2021

This month's meeting will be about the legislative issues that face dentistry. We are excited to have our very own Representative Colleen Burton join us! Please see pages 2 & 3.

Colleen Burton is a mother, grandmother, community leader, and State Representative for District 40 in the Florida House of Representatives.

Since being elected to the Florida House in 2014, Colleen quickly distinguished herself as a leader on economic, education, and healthcare issues. Colleen currently serves as the Chair of the Health & Human Services Committee and is a member of the Appropriations Committee. Colleen is not just a leader in Tallahassee, she is also a leader at home in Lakeland. She served as the Executive Director of the Imperial Symphony Orchestra and was then tapped to launch a countywide comprehensive community planning process called Polk Vision to improve economic, education, and community engagement opportunities for Polk County residents.

Over the years, Colleen has served on the boards of directors of numerous organizations including the Lakeland Republican Women's Club, Volunteers in Service to the Elderly (VISTE) Advisory board, United Way of Central Florida Community Impact Cabinet, Polk Hunger Council, and a Polk Tourist Development Council subcommittee.

Married since 1980 to Brad, the Burtons have raised three children: Chris, Tim, and Elizabeth. They have resided in Lakeland since 1993 and are active members at Resurrection Catholic Church. Colleen holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Public Administration from California State University, Sacramento.

Please RSVP via email @ pcedaemail@gmail.com. This meeting will be held at Grasslands Golf & Country Club, 1600 Grasslands Blvd. Lakeland. Cocktail hour starts at 6 p.m. and dinner at 6:30 p.m. Our presentation will begin promptly at 7 p.m.



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LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

SUPPORT FUNDING FOR THE DENTAL STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM (ch. 381.401) & DONATED DENTAL SERVICES (ch. 381.40195)

In 2019, the Legislature passed into law legislation to reinstate the Dental Student Loan Repayment Program and codify in statute the Donated Dental Services Program. Unfortunately, the Legislature did not appropriate any funding necessary to fully implement these programs. Based on an estimate provided by the Department of Health, the state would need to allocate approximately \$773,000 to fund these programs.

Dental Student Loan Repayment Plan

This program encourages dentists to work as full-time Medicaid providers in rural and underserved areas around the state. In exchange for this commitment, dentists will be eligible to receive financial assistance in the amount of \$50,000 for the repayment of their dental student loans. This program was very successful in the early 1990s, but due to budget shortfalls, the funding was cut and because the statute was inactive for many years the statute was eventually removed in 2012.

Since Florida has a robust workforce with over 14,000 licensed dentists and three dental schools graduating over 300 new dentists each year, there is a great opportunity for the Legislature to invest in a program that will help increase access to comprehensive dental care.

Donated Dental Services Program

The DDS program provides a platform for dentists and dental labs to donate free comprehensive dental treatment to people who are disabled, elderly, and medically compromised, and are unable to afford dental care. To continue providing services to individuals who would qualify for this program, the FDA supports state funding for two full-time coordinators and operational expenses.

The DDS program is administered through Dental Lifeline Network, which works with all 50 states to help facilitate dental care to those in need. Florida's DDS program is currently active with more than 500 volunteer dentists and more than 200 labs; however, there is only one parttime employee managing the requests for care. The FDA's Foundation is providing resources necessary to help keep the program functioning. The DDS programs that are the most successful are the ones that have dedicated funding from the state.

SUPPORT FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY WATER FLUORIDATION

The FDA supports \$200,000 in state funding for community water fluoridation efforts administered through the Department of Health. Community water fluoridation has proven for more than 70 years to significantly reduce the amount of tooth decay among individuals of all ages, especially those without access to routine dental care. Fluoride is naturally present in all water sources. Community water fluoridation is simply the adjustment of fluoride to the level recommended for optimal health.

Communities that invest in water fluoridation save an average of \$32.19 per capita in dental treatment costs. In fact, the average life-time costs per person to fluoridate a water system is less than the cost of one dental filling. For more information on community water fluoridation, visit www.floridafluoridation.org.

SUPPORT CLAWBACK LEGISLATION / REDUCING INSURER'S RECOVERY OF OVERPAYMENTS TO PROVIDERS

The FDA supports shortening the clawback period to 12-months in which the insurer can recover an overpayment to a health care provider.

Currently in Florida, an insurer can recover an overpayment made to a health care provider, in good faith, 30-months from the date of overpayment. This practice is known as a clawback. Since clawbacks can occur several years after a service was provided and can occur with little to no warning to providers, it makes it difficult for providers to maintain financial stability for their business when overpayments have to be paid back retroactively to insurance plans. Fifteen other states have legislation dictating how many months an insurer can look back/clawback to recover an overpayment from a provider. The times vary from 180 days, 6-months, 12-months, 18-months to 24-months. In contrast, a provider has, on average, 90 days to submit a claim to an insurance plan if he/she wants to be reimbursed. While contractually a plan has the authority to recover an overpayment made to a provider (which is the manner in which managed care plans operate), the FDA believe that the 30-month period in Florida is an outlier and is not in-line with look back/clawback provisions in other states. Shortening the clawback period to 12-months will not prevent dental plans from retracting payment for fraudulent billing, nor will it prevent dental plans from retracting claims by seeking judicial intervention if there is legal cause. It would simply set a limit on how long dental plans have to retract payments made in good faith.

OPPOSE DENTAL THERAPY LEGISLATION

SB 184 by Sen. Jeff Brandes (R-St. Petersburg)

The FDA does not support adding dental therapists as new licensed dental providers in Florida.

Proponents claim that this is a solution to address access to dental care in underserved and rural areas. Unlike the extensive training required to be a dentist, dental therapists are educated for only three-years out of high school and would be authorized to perform surgery or major irreversible procedures like extractions, partial root canals, and administration of local anesthesia. Lowering the standard of care for dentistry – particularly among our state's most vulnerable populations, who often suffer from some of the most complex medical issues and higher rates of tooth decay – is not a viable solution for Florida.

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