

Action Alert
Tufts Dental Facilities
Serving Individuals with Special Needs
December 15, 2008

PLEASE SUPPORT
THE REINSTATEMENT OF FUNDS CUTS FROM THE BUDGET
FOR DENTAL SERVICES FOR PATIENTS WITH DISABILITIES.

State support for this program has been reduced by **\$200,000** and will severely affect this valuable program to provide dental care for the most vulnerable citizens in the Commonwealth.

These funds are managed through the Department of Public Health (DPH).

THE PROGRAM:

- The **Tufts Dental Facilities (TDF)** has provided comprehensive dental care to special needs individuals since July 1976.
- Currently, the dental program treats over 9000 special needs patients at eight dental facilities throughout Massachusetts and over 4000 special needs individuals participate in the community program.
- There are virtually **no** alternative places for these patients to receive necessary dental care.

THE PROBLEMS:

- The dental program has been at the same level of funding for the past 5 years while the cost of providing dental care has risen dramatically. The 9C cuts will reduce funding even further to approximately that received in 1999.
- Access to care in certain geographical areas will be affected by strategic closing of TDF clinics and consolidation of staff, necessary to contain costs. It will be more difficult for the patients with disabilities to receive care.
- It will be difficult to recruit and retain dental team members who must have special training to provide care to patients with special needs.

- Untreated oral health problems can reduce the quality of life and contribute to serious medical problems such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes.
- Patients with special needs can rarely advocate for themselves and must rely on others to protect their health care services.

CALL OR E-MAIL AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND VOICE YOUR CONCERNS

■ **Governor Deval Patrick, (617) 725-4005 or email via Governor’s website:**
http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=gov3utilities&sid=Agov3&U=Agov3_contact_us

■ **DPH Commissioner John Auerbach, (617) 624-6000 or email via the DPH website:**
http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=eohhs2terminal&L=4&L0=Home&L1=Government&L2=Departments+and+Divisions&L3=Department+of+Public+Health&sid=Eeohhs2&b=terminalcontent&f=dph_g_feedback_form&csid=Eeohhs2

■ **Secretary Leslie Kirwan/Administration and Finance, (617) 727-2040 or email via website:**
http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=eoafutilities&sid=Eeoaf&U=Eeoaf_contact_us

■ **Secretary JudyAnn Bigby, Executive Office of Health and Human Services, (617) 573-1600**

YOUR PHONE CALL IS IMPORTANT!!!

Your call is important and will help the people in decision-making positions understand how hard it is to find dental services for the disabled person.

Please remember when calling or emailing that you will contact someone who is familiar with receiving calls from concerned citizens.

Suggested Script when contacting:
 Governor Patrick, Commissioner Auerbach, Secretary Kirwin, and Secretary Bigby:

Hi, my name is _____, I am from _____

It is my understanding that the Patrick administration is cutting \$200,000 from the dental health program for people with disabilities.

These cuts will affect the ability of my (son, daughter or person I care for) to receive essential dental care.

My (son, daughter or the person I care for) has been a patient at (identify developmental center or clinic where they receive treatment) for (number of years) and I want to continue with treatment at this center.

I am unsure of where else my (son, daughter, or person I care for) would be able to receive this necessary care.

I respectfully request that you reconsider reinstating these funds.

Thank you for taking the time to listen.