



ASDA Members,

Your Association has been very busy in the 2011 Legislative Session, championing many political issues for its members. The ASDA maintains constant vigilance to defeat harmful legislation and regulation, while working toward solutions to problems related to Medicaid, low-income access, auxiliary education and insurance reform. As a result of the efforts of the ASDA and its members, several important dentistry-related bills have been signed into law in the 2011 Legislative Session, and others are pending with a strong chance of success.

ENACTED LEGISLATION

The following dentistry-related legislation has been ENACTED in the 2011 Legislative Session:

- **Statewide Fluoridation (Act 197)** – The statewide fluoridation law is a huge public health measure which will result in the fluoridation of approximately 32 additional community water systems in the State of Arkansas, including Fort Smith and Hot Springs. This law was passed thanks, in large part, to dentistry’s selfless legislative efforts early on in this session, which helped ensure the number of votes necessary for enactment. Act 197 mandates fluoridation of the state’s community water supplies serving populations of 5,000 or more. The Pew Report on state dental policies, in which Arkansas was assigned a failing grade in the area of dental health, played a big role in the passage of this legislation. The ASDA remained vigilant to ensure its passage because of the solid science demonstrating that community water fluoridation is vitally important to the prevention of dental decay in younger Arkansans, and considers this law a huge victory in the battle to improve access to preventative dental health care.
- **Collaborative Hygiene (Act 89)** – This law gives dental hygienists the ability to perform dental hygiene procedures for certain patients in public settings without the direct supervision of a dentist, but **only** in conjunction with the hygienists “collaborative dentist,” who will at all times remain in control of services provided. The ASDA believes that this will greatly improve access to important dental care for patients who are otherwise not likely to receive such care, while promoting one of the ASDA’s core values—PREVENTION over TREATMENT.
- **Fluoride Varnish (Act 90)** – Under this law, pediatricians who have received proper training will be allowed to apply fluoride varnishes to patients who do not have dental homes, improving access and preventative dental care to Arkansas children.
- **Licensure and Background Checks (Act 47)** – This law simply clarifies the licensure process for dentists and hygienists and removes obsolete language regarding licensure testing.

PENDING LEGISLATION

The following dentistry-related bills remain PENDING in the 2011 Legislative Session:

- **Non-Covered Services (HB1425)** – This bill, sponsored by Representative Prissy Hickerson, would prohibit dental insurance companies from limiting fees for services not included in dental benefit plans. At the time of this writing, HB1425 has been approved by the House and is expected to the first order of business for the Senate Committee on Insurance and Commerce at its meeting on Tuesday, March 15 at 10:00 a.m. The ASDA appreciates all of Rep. Hickerson’s hard work in promoting this important legislation and will be following this measure closely as it moves through the legislature. This issue has been a battle on a nationwide level, but most of the affected parties in Arkansas (Delta Dental, Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce, and the majority of insurance groups) are not opposed to this legislation. This is an issue of great import to the practice of dentistry, and the ASDA is actively supporting this bill to protect its members.
- **Prescription Drug Monitoring (SB345)** – This proposed legislation, sponsored by Senator Percy Malone, would establish a prescription drug monitoring program in Arkansas, giving dentists and other applicable healthcare providers the ability to search patients’ prescription drug records. The ASDA supports this bill because it believes that it is an important measure to curb prescription drug abuse in Arkansas.

The full text of the above Acts and Bills is available on the ASDA website at www.arkansasdentistry.org. We will also be providing regular updates as the session proceeds via the website, facebook and Twitter.

Arkansas Medicaid Program News

The ASDA has been made aware of proposed changes that would “fundamentally transform” the Arkansas Medicaid program. As we understand the proposal, which has been submitted to the Federal Health and Human Services Secretary by Arkansas Medicaid, the changes would transform the Medicaid delivery system in the State of Arkansas, moving away from the current “fee for service” model and toward a more “shared” approach to care. It is unclear at this time how or if dentistry will be affected, but the ASDA will maintain a vigilant watch over the proposal in order to protect the interests of its members, and will provide updates on the proposal when available.

Don't Forget to Register for the ASDA 2011 Scientific Session!

The ASDA 2011 Annual Scientific Session will be held April 15-16 at the Statehouse Convention Center in Little Rock. Online registration and payment is now available on our website, and the response has been overwhelming. Don't miss out on this session! We have a great line-up of clinicians, speakers, events and vendors to showcase the newest dental equipment and techniques that dentistry has to offer. Register to attend online now at www.arkansasdentistry.org!

If you have questions, concerns or would like additional information, please feel free to contact Billy Tarpley, ASDA Executive Director, by e-mail (billy@arkansasdentistry.org) or telephone (501.834.7650).

STAY CONNECTED AND INFORMED!

Please bookmark our new and improved website in your browser and visit it frequently for important updates on the legislative session, as well as other dentistry-related news and information. You can also stay connected and informed by finding and “liking” the ASDA page on Facebook and by following us on Twitter (ARStateDentAssn). (See links on the ASDA website.)

DO WE HAVE YOUR CURRENT E-MAIL ADDRESS?

If you aren't receiving updates from the ASDA via e-mail, we probably do not have your current e-mail address. To receive important and time-sensitive messages, please send your current e-mail contact information to Cheryl Ball, Membership Director, at cheryl@arkansasdentistry.org. We maintain this information in confidence, and your e-mail address will never be shared or sold. The ASDA uses your information only to communicate important Association-related business.



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