



## DENTAL CARE ACCESS ACCOUNT INITIATIVE

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### SUPPORT

#### Key Points:

- The FDA supports legislation to establish a joint local and state dental care access account initiative to promote economic development by providing financial support to qualified, Florida licensed dentists who practice in dental health professional shortage areas, medically underserved areas or treat medically underserved populations.
- This initiative would help address one of the major concerns in dentistry: access to dental care, especially in dental health professional shortage areas.
- The Department of Health (DOH) would establish dental care access accounts for each dentist selected for participation. Subject to appropriations, the state may award funds of up to \$100,000 per dentist's account per year for up to 5 years, which may not exceed three times the amount contributed by a local source.
- Dentists selected for the program could spend funds from his/her dental care access account for not only the repayment of student loans, but also for investment in property, facilities or equipment to establish a private practice.
- A Florida licensed dentist can qualify for a dental care access account initiative if he/she works in a public health program located in a dental health professional shortage area, medically underserved area or treat medically underserved populations for at least two years. Additionally, a dentist can access these funds if he/she shows a commitment to open a private practice in one of the areas listed above, maintain an active Medicaid provider agreement, enroll in one or more Medicaid managed care plans, expend sufficient capital to make substantial progress in opening their own dental practice and obtain financial support from the local community in which they will practice.
- Recent reports have indicated that dental students are graduating with an average of \$250,000 in student loan debt from public schools and as much as \$400,000 from private schools. This substantial amount of debt typically dictates what areas of the state dentists migrate to in order to meet their debt obligations.
- Prior participants in previous student loan repayment programs have set-up their dental practice in areas where they served out their dental student loan repayment commitment. By providing this type of financial support to dentists, the state will help increase access to quality dental care around the state.
- This program has the potential to create a win-win situation for the state of Florida, for dental graduates and for patients who will have better access to much needed dental care.

## **SPONSORS OF THE 2015 DENTAL CARE ACCESS ACCOUNT INITIATIVE LEGISLATION**

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### **CS/CS/SB 606**

Sen. Don Gaetz (R-Destin), Bill Sponsor

Sen. Denise Grimsley (R-Sebring), Co-Sponsor

Sen. Alan Hays (R-Umatilla), Co-Sponsor

Sen. Bill Montford (D-Quincy), Co-Sponsor

Sen. Eleanor Sobel (D-Hollywood), Co-Sponsor

Sen. Darren Soto (D-Kissimmee), Co-Sponsor

### **CS/HB 657**

Rep. Travis Cummings (R-Orange Park), Bill Sponsor

Rep. Alan Williams (D-Tallahassee), Primary Co-Sponsor

Rep. Michael Bileca (R-Miami), Co-Sponsor

Rep. Randolph Bracy (D-Ocoee), Co-Sponsor

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Rep. Greg Steube (R-Sarasota), Co-Sponsor

Rep. John Tobia (R-Melbourne), Co-Sponsor