



The State of Maine's Dental System for people with ID/DD

**Richard Estabrook
Region 3 Review Committee Member
Appointed by the MDSOAB**

The Basic Right Under Maine Law

“A person with an intellectual disability, autism, or acquired brain injury is **entitled** to receive **prompt and appropriate** medical and **dental treatment** and care for physical and mental ailments and for the prevention of any illness or disability, and medical treatment must be consistent with the accepted standards of medical practice in the community, unless the religion of the person with intellectual disability, autism, or acquired brain injury so prohibits.”

34-B MRS Section 5065(8) {Emphasis added}



What is Out There for Treatment?

- Dr. Pavurulu (“Dr. P”), Bangor Clinic, also known as “Care First”
- Dr. Pavurulu is the major provider of dental services to persons with intellectual disabilities or autism in Maine, especially the persons who need sedation.
- As of the end of February 2024 Dr. P had 247 patients who needed sedation, and 134 who did not need sedation.
- Dr. P schedules approximately four persons per day for dental services. For persons who need sedation, visits are 18-24 months between each visit.
- As of December 15, 2023 there were 240 people who needed dental sedation on his waitlist.

What is Out There for Treatment?

- The MDSOAB Dental Subcommittee has tried to identify other dental providers, especially those who are willing to do dental services with sedation.
- Northeast Dental Practices, Brewer They are setting up consultation appointments. As of 8/21/2024 the earliest available appointment for a consultation is February 2025 and the earliest available appointment for dental work is February 2026
- Mainly Teeth (Portland/Windham) Still trying to contact
- Community Dental (Augusta) has a contract for approximately \$90,000 with DHHS Office of Behavioral Health but unsure if any persons with intellectual disabilities or autism are served (? for Riverview patients?)
- Kennebec Valley Family Dentistry; does nitrous but not general anesthesia; even doing nitrous is difficult

Levels of sedation: Mild, moderate, and deep

- **Mild:** Patients are aware of what is going on around them. The patient can respond normally to verbal commands
- **Moderate:** The patient is awake, but groggy and in a dreamlike state. Generally, the patient can respond to a verbal command
- **Deep:** The patient is nearing unconscious, but can be awakened
- **General anesthesia:** The patient is completely unconscious. This almost always has to be done in a hospital



Dental Subcommittee Preliminary Findings & Recommendations

1. Finding: The legal standard of entitlement under 34-B 5605(8) is not being met, especially for persons who need sedation
2. Finding: A system of care that relies so heavily on one person, Dr. P, is fundamentally flawed. Such a “system” is too vulnerable, too subject to severe disruption if something happens to the one person.
3. Finding: The hodgepodge of other dental services is not meeting the need.
4. Recommendation: The Dental Subcommittee recommends that in order to fulfill its legal obligations the Department of Health and Human Services establish and fund a second specialized clinic in the southern part of the state, possibly in conjunction with the University of New England School of Dentistry



Thank you!

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