

Date of Hearing: February 9, 2023

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON RULES  
James Ramos, Chair  
ACR 10 (Weber) – As Introduced February 1, 2023

**SUBJECT:** Children’s Dental Health Month.

**SUMMARY:** Declares the month of February 2023 as Children’s Dental Health Month. Specifically, **this resolution** makes the following legislative findings:

- 1) Tooth decay is the number one chronic infectious disease affecting children in the United States, although it is largely preventable. Early dental visits help prevent cavities and tooth decay. Basic preventive treatments like fluoride varnish, dental sealants, and community water fluoridation can all help prevent cavities in primary (baby) teeth.
- 2) In California, tooth decay remains a significant public health problem. By the third grade, 6 in 10 children have experienced tooth decay and one in five children have untreated tooth decay.
- 3) Untreated cavities can cause pain and infections that may lead to problems with eating, speaking, playing, and learning. California children miss 874,000 days of school each year due to dental problems.
- 4) Tooth decay disparities related to race or ethnicity, or both, and socioeconomic status continue to exist in California and undermine health equity. Among socioeconomic disadvantaged children, 72.3 percent experience tooth decay and 26 percent experience untreated tooth decay.
- 5) California has made significant investments in recent years to improve the oral health infrastructure in the state, including efforts to increase preventive dental services and improve dental health for children enrolled in Medi-Cal.
- 6) Despite this expanded access, barriers to oral health care still exist. COVID-19 negatively impacted and delayed care for many Californians, exacerbating access-to-care issues for children’s oral health. In fact, less than one-half of all children enrolled by Medi-Cal visited a dentist last year.
- 7) Children’s Dental Health Month is an important nationwide tool for raising awareness about the importance of childhood oral health and the role it plays in children’s overall health among California’s leaders, policy makers, and the public about the impact of poor oral health on children.

**FISCAL EFFECT:** None

**REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

**Support**

None on file

**Opposition**

None on file

**Analysis Prepared by:** Michael Erke / RLS. / (916) 319-2800