

Date of Hearing: May 6, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 1717 (Castillo) – As Amended April 23, 2026

Policy Committee: Health

Vote: 16 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: No

Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill requires the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to increase the Medi-Cal reimbursement for a house/extended care facility dental service call to reflect the travel costs for delivering services in the patient's private residence or facility, subject to federal approvals if needed, availability of federal financial participation, and an appropriation.

FISCAL EFFECT:

Cost pressures to DHCS in the tens of millions of dollars per year. DHCS estimates costs of \$500,000 (\$250,000 General Fund (GF), \$250,000 federal funds) for contract resources to conduct a statewide rate study of travel costs, and low- to mid-tens of millions of dollars annually to fund the travel services benefit (GF, federal funds), depending on the results of the rate study.

The Legislative Analyst's Office recently warned of General Fund structural deficits of around \$35 billion per year in the 2027-28 fiscal year and ongoing.

COMMENTS:

1) **Purpose.** This bill is sponsored by Golden Age Dental Care. According to the author:

For many individuals with developmental, physical, or behavioral conditions, a routine dental visit isn't simple. These visits often require more time, additional staff, and specialized care. Unfortunately, current reimbursement rates doesn't reflect that, which discourages providers from taking these patients. [This bill] will make sure that Medi-Cal patients with complex needs can actually access dental care by ensuring providers are better supported when delivering more time-intensive care.

2) **Background.** Proposition 56 of 2016 imposed a tobacco tax; part of the tax revenue was allocated to support supplemental rate increases for Medi-Cal dental services. These supplemental payments enhance reimbursement for specific dental categories including preventive, diagnostic, and restorative services. As fewer people smoke each year, Proposition 56 revenues are also decreasing, and because the remaining Proposition 56 dollars were redirected to support other categories of health care services, dental supplemental payments funded with Proposition 56 revenues have recently required General

Fund support to maintain. To reduce projected General Fund deficits, the 2025-26 state budget eliminated dental coverage for adults with unsatisfactory immigration status and eliminated General Fund support for Proposition 56 dental supplemental payments, beginning July 1, 2026. The Governor's 2026-27 budget is consistent with those dental payment cuts.

Medi-Cal covers code "D9410: House/ Extended Care Facility Call," which is meant to account for the extra time for travel, logistics, and setup for a provider to make a house call. Allowing dental professionals to bill this code provides an incentive to serve hard-to-reach populations with limited mobility, such as those in skilled nursing or assisted living facilities. According to the Medi-Cal Dental Program Provider Handbook, use of code D9410 requires, when a provider is requesting treatment for a patient who cannot leave their private residence due to a medical condition, the patient's physician to submit a letter documenting the patient's specific medical condition, the reason why the patient cannot leave their private residence, and the length of time the patient will be homebound. Medi-Cal allows the benefit to be billed once per patient per date of service and only in conjunction with procedures that are payable. The rate for the code is \$20.00 and was set in 1992. With Proposition 56 enhanced payments, the rate for this code increases by 40% to \$28.00.

- 3) **Related Legislation.** AB 1670 (Arambula), pending in this committee, requires additional compensation to Medi-Cal dental providers for treatment of individuals who have challenges receiving dental treatment because of a physical, behavioral, developmental, or emotional condition, and sets parameters for such payment.

Analysis Prepared by: Allegra Kim / APPR. / (916) 319-2081