

March 16, 2023

The Honorable Jim Wood, DDS
Chair, Assembly Committee on Health
1020 N Street, Room 390
Sacramento, California 95814

**Re: AB 952 (Wood) – Dental Plan Transparency Disclosures – SUPPORT
As Introduced, February 14, 2023**

Dear Chair Wood:

The American Association of Endodontists (AAE) is proud to support AB 952 (Wood), which would require dental insurance plans to disclose whether an enrollee's plan is subject to state or federal law at the time of eligibility and benefit determination, and further, require insurance or coverage cards to include state or federal law information.

California has made great strides in increasing access to oral health care, with an estimated 86% of individuals having some form of dental coverage.¹ Of those with coverage, 50% receive those benefits through their employer.² Some employers offer "self-insured" plans, which are regulated at the federal level in accordance with the Employment Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, also known as ERISA. ERISA plans are exempt from state level rules and regulations intended to protect patients and ensure they are receiving value from their dental insurance.

Over 40% of Californians have coverage from dental plans exempt from California laws and regulations. It can be difficult to determine if a dental plan is regulated by the state or federal law. Often, a dental office does not know if a patient's plan is self-funded or fully-funded until after the billing process has been completed, when a plan has denied coverage or cited a billing exemption for services already rendered. This lack of transparency can be confusing and frustrating for both the patient and provider and impedes on the patient-provider relationship.

While ERISA plans are not subject to California's more stringent insurance laws due to preemption, accountability measures can still be put in place at a state level to address this issue. AB 952 helps address these issues by creating more transparency around plan type, which will help avoid confusion and frustration for both provider and patient. Notifying a dental office of what type of plan a patient has is critical to communicating plan coverage to a patient and providing information what entity regulates the plan, and who to contact should a conflict resolve with the plan. These disclosures are a simple, yet effective way to increase transparency between dental plans, patients and provider. By providing these disclosures, AB 952 will help protect patient- provider relationships, which in turn, fosters increased access to oral health care in California.

¹ National Association of Dental Plans. California: Dental Benefits Fact Sheet 2022.

² National Association of Dental Plans. California: Dental Benefits Fact Sheet 2021.

For these reasons, **AAE is proud support AB 952 (Wood), and respectfully requests an AYE vote** in the Assembly Health Committee. If you have any questions or concerns about our position, please contact advocacy@aae.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'SZ', is written below the word 'Sincerely,'.

Stefan I. Zweig, D.D.S., F.A.C.D.
AAE President

Cc: Members and staff, Assembly Committee on Health
Assemblymember Jim Wood, DDS