

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

SUPPORT CHILDREN'S DENTAL HEALTH

Become an original co-sponsor of the Children's Dental Health Act of 2004

June 1, 2004

Dear Colleague:

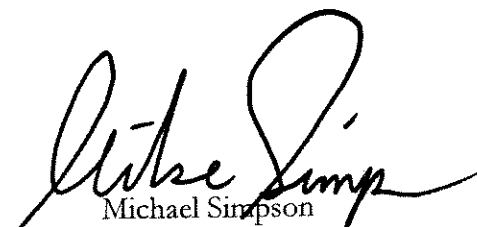
Next Thursday, June 10th, we plan to introduce the Children's Dental Health Act of 2004. This legislation provides incentives for states and health care providers to improve access to dental services for children. The companion legislation, S. 1142, was introduced by Senators Bingaman (D-NM) and Cochran (R-MS).

For every child in this country without health insurance there are 2.6 without dental insurance, approximately 23 million children total. Many states say that their greatest pediatric health care problem is lack of access to dental services for children receiving Medicaid. Untreated dental problems only get worse and ultimately cost more. Left untreated, a child will often end up in a hospital emergency or operating room, costing the state much more than regular dental visits and care. In fact, based on a 1999 study published in Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, Louisiana paid an extra \$650 per Medicaid-eligible child for dental care provided in a hospital due to operating room use and anesthesia.

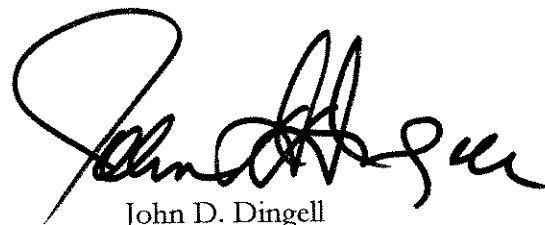
The Children's Dental Health Improvement Act includes provisions to improve access to dental care in the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). It also establishes several new grant programs aimed to increase access to oral health care services—particularly in underserved areas and among at-risk populations, such as rural areas and children from low-income families. This bill would provide new support for school-based oral health literacy programs and would create new or expanding existing school-linked dental sealant programs to improve oral health. Finally, the legislation creates a federal Oral Health Initiative to ensure oral health is a key focus in Health and Human Services.

Attached is a summary of this legislation. If you have additional questions or would like to cosponsor please call Megan Milam of Congressman Simpson's office at 5-5531 or the Committee on Energy and Commerce Minority Staff at 6-3400. The deadline to be an original co-sponsor is June 9, 2004.

Sincerely,



Michael Simpson
Member of Congress



John D. Dingell
Member of Congress