

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2016 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Health Policy

CS/CS/HB 139 — Dental Care

by Appropriations Committee; Health Quality Subcommittee; and Rep. Cummings and others (CS/SB 234 by Appropriations Committee; and Senators Gaetz, Hays, Abruzzo, Ring, Clemens, and Soto)

The bill creates a joint state and local dental care access accounts initiative to promote local economic development and to encourage Florida-licensed dentists to practice in dental health professional shortage areas or medically underserved areas, or to serve a medically underserved population, subject to the availability of funds.

The bill directs the Department of Health (DOH) to create individual benefit accounts through an electronic benefits transfer system for each dentist who satisfies the requirements for participation. A qualifying dentist must be actively employed by a public health program (county health department, Children's Medical Services program, federally qualified community health center, federally funded migrant health center, or other publicly funded or nonprofit health care program designated by the DOH) in a targeted area or demonstrate a commitment to opening a dental practice that serves at least 1,200 patients and obtaining local financial support from the community where the dentist will practice in that targeted area. No more than 10 new dental care access accounts may be established per fiscal year.

Funds from the account may be used to repay dental school loans; purchase property, facilities, or equipment for a dental office; or pay for transitional expenses relating to relocating or opening a dental practice. Subject to availability, a practitioner may receive funds for up to five years. An account may be terminated under certain conditions and any unspent funds are returned to the donor or redistributed to other available applicants.

The sum of \$1 million in General Revenue recurring funds is appropriated to the DOH for allocation to the dental access accounts.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2016.

Vote: Senate 40-0; House 117-0