

Massachusetts Oncology Patient Survivors and Supporters (MOPSS)

MOPSS is a group of dedicated volunteers working to ensure fair dental coverage for all. For the past several years, MOPSS has partnered with elected representatives and patient advocacy organizations to pass legislation that will cover medically-related dental treatment in the state. This coverage is especially critical to survivors of head and neck cancer, many of whom have ongoing treatment-related dental issues that can cost thousands of dollars.

Currently we are supporting Massachusetts House Bill 1094, a copy of which is enclosed in this packet. If passed, the bill would require insurers doing business in the state to cover medically-related dental treatment. The bill is in Committee at the Massachusetts State House, and we are hoping to garner as much support as possible from the public and health care professionals.

This packet contains letters of support for the bill. We invite you to join MOPSS in supporting this important legislation that will make a difference in many state residents' lives.

For more information about the bill or to join MOPSS, please contact Tom Healy:

Email: thealy1019@gmail.com
Phone/Text: 781-686-3774

Thank you for your support!

Tom Healy and Valerie Hope Goldstein
MOPSS

HOUSE No. 1094

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Paul McMurtry

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act expanding coverage of dental procedures.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Paul McMurtry</i>	<i>11th Norfolk</i>	<i>1/19/2023</i>
<i>Michael F. Rush</i>	<i>Norfolk and Suffolk</i>	<i>3/15/2023</i>

HOUSE No. 1094

By Representative McMurtry of Dedham, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 1094) of Paul McMurtry relative to expanding coverage of dental procedures. Financial Services.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE HOUSE, NO. 1154 OF 2021-2022.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court
(2023-2024)**

An Act expanding coverage of dental procedures.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 32A of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after
2 section 17O, as inserted by chapter 233 of the acts 2016, the following section:-

3 Section 17P. Any coverage offered by the commission to an active or retired employee of
4 the commonwealth insured under the group insurance commission shall provide coverage for a
5 dental procedure that is related to or resulting from a medical condition for which coverage is
6 provided.

7 SECTION 2. Chapter 118E of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after
8 section 10J, as inserted by chapter 233 of the acts 2016, the following section:-

9 Section 10K. The division shall provide coverage for a dental procedure that is related to
10 or resulting from a medical condition for which coverage is provided.

11 SECTION 3. Chapter 175 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after
12 section 47II, as inserted by chapter 233 of the acts 2016, the following section:-

13 Section 47JJ. A policy, contract, agreement, plan or certificate of insurance issued,
14 delivered or renewed within the commonwealth that provides medical expense coverage shall
15 provide coverage for a dental procedure that is related to or resulting from a medical condition
16 for which coverage is provided.

17 SECTION 4. Chapter 176A of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after
18 section 8KK, as inserted by chapter 233 of the acts 2016, the following section:-

19 Section 8LL. A contract between a subscriber and the corporation under an individual or
20 group hospital service plan that is delivered, issued or renewed within the commonwealth shall
21 provide coverage for a dental procedure that is related to or resulting from a medical condition
22 for which coverage is provided.

23 SECTION 5. Chapter 176B of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after
24 section 4KK, as inserted by chapter 233 of the acts 2016, the following section:-

25 Section 4LL. A subscription certificate under an individual or group medical service
26 agreement delivered, issued or renewed within the commonwealth shall provide coverage for a
27 dental procedure that is related to or resulting from a medical condition for which coverage is
28 provided.

29 SECTION 6. Chapter 176G of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after
30 section 4CC, as inserted by chapter 233 of the acts 2016, the following section:-

31 Section 4DD. An individual or group health maintenance contract shall provide
32 coverage for a dental procedure that is related to or resulting from a medical condition for which
33 coverage is provided.



Caroline Powers
SVP, External Affairs

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caroline_powers@dfci.harvard.edu
www.dana-farber.org

March 28, 2023

The Honorable Paul McMurtry
Massachusetts House
State House
24 Beacon Street, Room 171
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Representative McMurtry,

I write to you to express the support of Dana-Farber Cancer Institute of your legislation *H. 1094, An Act Expanding Coverage of Dental Procedures*. This legislation would ensure that Commonwealth citizens have access to dental procedures resulting from a medical condition by requiring insurance coverage.

Each year, more than 68,000 people in the United States are diagnosed with head and neck cancer. Many of these patients will receive treatment and survive for many years. However, patients with head and neck cancer may experience problems with teeth and oral health due to the cancer itself and its treatment. While it may seem obvious that the tumor itself may cause damage or destruction of the teeth and jaw, other causes can also be implicated. Radiation therapy is often a part of standard treatment for head or neck cancer patients. However, it can cause problems such as infection to the gums, mouth sores and tooth decay. Access to a dental provider and coverage for the repair or replacement of teeth that might be lost or impacted by cancer or its treatment is key to a high quality of life for these patients.

For these reasons, we commend your introduction of *H. 1094, An Act Expanding Coverage of Dental Procedures* and offer our support of your efforts.

Thank you for all your work on behalf of cancer patients and their families. If I can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Caroline Powers".

Caroline Powers
Senior Vice President, External Affairs



HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL
TEACHING HOSPITAL



March 30, 2023

The Honorable Paul McMurtry
State House, Room 26
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Representative McMurtry:

I am writing regarding House Bill #1094, *An Act expanding coverage of dental procedures*, which was recently brought to my attention by your constituent, Mr. Thomas Healy of Dedham, MA.

Unfortunately for Mr. Healy and many other cancer survivors, oral complications resulting from both the disease itself and its treatment are common. This is especially true for patients with head and neck cancer, who are treated with chemotherapy and radiation therapy. These complications may be acute or chronic in nature, and include pain, infections, mouth sores, problems moving the jaw and swallowing, tooth decay, and gum disease among other things. They can also affect eating and speaking and may result in patients avoiding other people and becoming withdrawn or depressed.

Oral surgery, the repair or replacement of impacted teeth, or other dental work is often necessary to address these complications. However, some patients lack access to insurance coverage, and are instead forced to pay out of pocket for services that are critical to their overall health and quality of life.

Furthermore, research has shown that lack of access to comprehensive oral care often has extremely negative impacts for people living with other chronic conditions, including diabetes and heart and lung diseases, and those with behavioral health conditions.

We applaud you for your efforts to ensure that patients who find themselves in these difficult situations have access to medically-necessary dental procedures, and thank you for helping to promote oral health for all residents of the Commonwealth.

Please do not hesitate to reach out if I can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin Sanginario". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Kevin Sanginario
Director, State Government Advocacy
Office of Government Affairs

Dear Representative McMurtry and Senator Rush,

Thank you for filing H.1094, An Act Expanding Coverage of Dental Procedures.

I am writing as the Legislative Consultant for the Massachusetts Society of Otolaryngology/Head and Neck Surgery (MSO) at the request of Tom Healy, representative of the Mass Oncology Patient Survivors and Supporters.

The MSO proudly supported this bill in the last session (H.1154) and will do so with written testimony again when the bill is heard by the Financial Services Committee this year. Attached is the letter the MSO sent to the Committee on Health Care Financing in support of the legislation.

We look forward to working with you and your staff, and with the Mass Oncology Patient Survivors and Supporters, to advance H.1094.

Thank you.

Ronna Wallace
MSO Legislative Consultant
617-721-5655

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April 26, 2022

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Rep. John Lawn
Chair, Health Care Financing Committee
State House, Room 236
Boston, MA 02133

Senator Cindy Friedman
Chair, Health Care Financing Committee
State House, Room 208
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chair Lawn and Chair Friedman,

The Massachusetts Society of Otolaryngology/Head and Neck Surgery, Inc (MSO) is the only statewide organization formed to represent the professional interests of otolaryngologists in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Otolaryngologists are physicians trained in the medical and surgical management and treatment of patients with diseases and disorders of the ear, nose, throat (ENT), and related structures of the head and neck.

Consistent with our mission as physicians and our commitment to our patients, the MSO wishes to communicate our strong support for H.1154, An Act Expanding Coverage of Dental Procedures, filed by Representative Paul McMurtry. This legislation would require public and private health insurers to provide coverage for dental procedures that are related to or resulting from a medical condition for which coverage is provided.

According to the [American Cancer Society](#), an estimated 66,470 people (48,520 men and 17,950 women) are diagnosed with head and neck cancer each year (excluding cancer of the thyroid). Although the percentage of these patients in the United States is about four percent of all cancers diagnosed, the importance of these diseases is heightened by the functional problems and aesthetic differences commonly associated with this type of cancer and its treatment, including changes in appearance, speech, smell, taste, swallowing and sight. Not only can the tumor itself cause damage or destruction to the teeth and jaw, other causes can also be implicated. For example, radiation therapy, often a standard treatment for head and neck cancers, can cause gum infections, mouth sores and tooth decay. Many patients cannot afford the cost of the necessary dental procedures resulting from their cancers or treatment, procedures that are critical to their overall health and quality of life. Access to a dental provider and insurance coverage for dental procedures related to, or resulting from, cancer or its treatment is key to a high quality of life for these patients.

On behalf of our patients suffering from head and neck cancers, and their families, the MSO urges the Committee on Health Care Financing to report H.1154 out of Committee favorably. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Alex Grilli, M.D. | President

Dedicated to enhancing the quality of otolaryngological care in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts



P. O. Box 53 Locust Valley, New York 11560-0053
Phone: 1-800-377-0928
www.spohnc.org

SPOHNC is dedicated to raising awareness and meeting the needs of oral and head and neck cancer patients through its resources and publications

March 31, 2023

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In memoriam

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The Honorable Senator Michael Rush
State House, Room 171
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable State Representative Paul McMurtry
State House, Room 171
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Senator Rush and Representative McMurtry,

On behalf of SPOHNC (Support For People With Oral And Head And Neck Cancer), I am writing regarding *House Bill #1094, An Act Expanding Coverage of Dental Procedures.*

Mr. Thomas Healy of Dedham, MA, one of your constituents and a head and neck cancer survivor has taken on this endeavor to bring the importance of passing this bill with your fellow Legislators.

According to statistics from the American Cancer Society, approximately 66,470 Americans are diagnosed with oral, head and neck cancer each year excluding cancer of the thyroid.

Although the percentage of these patients in the United States is about 3% to 5% of all cancers diagnosed, the importance of these diseases is heightened by the fact the functional problems and aesthetic differences are commonly associated with this type of cancer and its treatment. Indeed, coping with this disease can be complex. Not only is a person dealing with a diagnosis that is life-threatening, but must also deal with possible changes in appearance, speech, smell, taste, swallowing and sight. Many head and neck cancer patients suffer debilitating side effects as a result of their treatment one being oral complications after undergoing radiation therapy, or in association with surgical treatment. Many individuals face complications that often prove very challenging.

Patients need access to medically necessary dental procedures and assurance that private insurance companies and Medicare will cover those expenses. Many patients cannot afford and simply go without or are forced to pay for services that are critical to their quality of life. SPOHNC receives daily calls from patients looking for other means to cover their dental due to the lack of coverage for these services. It is extremely devastating to a patient when not being able to eat properly amongst their family or friends or going to a social gathering or restaurant. These changes can deeply affect the individuals comfort, ability to chew and swallow, which in turn affects overall level of nutrition, and consequently general health and quality of life.

For many years, SPOHNC has worked with The Center For Medicare Advocacy to see policy and/or statutory change to establish better dental coverage in Medicare. The Center has been working in broad coalition to try to get the agency to expand its definition of what is coverable “medically necessary” dental care. This is also critical for private insurance companies to allow these necessary expenses.

SPOHNC applauds Mr. Healy’s efforts and that of the Legislators of the State of MA to ensure every cancer patient has access to medically necessary dental procedures.

Thank you for your attention in this matter. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Ann Caputo".

Mary Ann Caputo
Executive Director

Valerie Hope Goldstein
Facilitator, SPOHNC Boston

Lisa G. Whelan
Facilitator, SPOHNC Danvers

Judith Pregot
Facilitator, SPOHNC Cape Cod



Massachusetts Society of Clinical Oncologists

MSCO

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April 10, 2023

The Honorable Paul McMurtry
State House, Room 171
Boston, MA 02133

Re: MA House Bill 1094 An Act expanding coverage of dental procedures

Dear Representative McMurty,

I write on behalf of the Massachusetts Society of Clinical Oncologists (MSCO) which represents oncologists throughout the Commonwealth. Oncologists are responsible for providing and improving the quality of care for cancer patients.

MSCO has been working closely with one of our constituents, Thomas Healy, regarding House Bill 1094. Mr. Healy is a passionate survivor who, like so many others, has had to deal with life after cancer treatments and the unexpected complications that arise. These complications are especially true for patients suffering from head and neck cancer, who are treated with chemotherapy and radiation treatment.

Head and neck cancer treatment depends on several factors and the treatment often involves surgery, radiation therapy, and/or chemotherapy. After treatment, recovery from head and neck cancers may involve working with rehabilitation specialists and other experts to cope with side effects, such as hearing loss, difficulty eating, dental problems, thyroid issues, difficulty breathing or difficulty speaking. Patients and their caregivers are faced with difficult challenges as a result of these side effects and require lifelong strategies for alleviating their detrimental impact on basic life functions and quality of life.

As cancer doctors, we see every day how our patients struggle to afford their necessary aftercare as a result of their cancer treatment. Often, we have difficulty finding support systems to assist them. For these patients, a high quality of life is dependent on access to dental providers and coverage associated with, or resulting from, cancer and its treatment.

On behalf of our patients, specially advocate Thomas Healy, we applaud your efforts to ensure that cancer patients who face difficulty have access to medical dental treatment.

Thank you for your time and attention in this matter. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you need further assistance.



Massachusetts Society of Clinical Oncologists

Respectfully,

Michael Constantine, MD
President

243 Charles Street, Suite 815
Boston, MA 02114
T 617 573 4099
M 314 302 1232
F 617 573 3415
mark_varvares@meei.harvard.edu

April 17, 2023

The Honorable Paul McMurtry
State House, Room 171
Boston, MA 02133

Re: MA House Bill 1094 An Act expanding coverage of dental procedures

Dear Mr. McMurtry:

I write to you as the Chair of the Department of Otolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery at Harvard Medical School, the Chief of the same service at Massachusetts Eye and Ear and the Massachusetts General Hospital and as a career long head and neck surgical oncologist. I know I speak for the Boston head and neck surgical community who has been watching our patients struggle with this issue for decades.

As a head and neck cancer surgeon I am intimately involved in the care of these courageous patients, helping them through diagnosis, treatment-which can be difficult and life changing and through survivorship, which presents to them challenges faced that are unlike any other group of cancer survivors.

Head and neck cancer treatment depends on several factors and the treatment often involves surgery, radiation therapy, and/or chemotherapy. After treatment, recovery from head and neck cancers may involve working with rehabilitation specialists and other experts to cope with side effects, such as hearing loss, difficulty eating, dental problems, thyroid issues, difficulty breathing or difficulty speaking. Patients and their caregivers are faced with difficult challenges as a result of these side effects and require lifelong strategies for alleviating their detrimental impact on basic life functions and quality of life.

As cancer doctors, we see every day how our patients struggle to afford their necessary aftercare as a result of their cancer treatment. Often, we have difficulty finding support systems to assist them. For these patients, a high quality of life is dependent on access to dental providers and coverage associated with, or resulting from, cancer and its treatment.

In fact, for many of our patients who have had portions of their upper or lower jaws removed, access to a maxillofacial prosthodontist (a very specialized dentist) who can create a prosthetic upper jaw, as an example, can make the difference that allows a patient to being able to speak and be heard and to be able to eat by mouth, rather than through a rubber tube the is placed directly into their stomach through the

abdominal wall. In many cases patients must pay out of pocket for such prosthetic devices, which can cost upwards of \$50,000.

On behalf of our patients, we applaud your efforts to ensure that cancer patients who face difficulty have access to medical dental treatment.

Thank you for your time and attention in this matter. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you need further assistance.

Sincerely yours

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark A. Varvares". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Mark A. Varvares, MD, FACS
John W. Merriam and William W. Montgomery Professor and Chair
Department of Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery, Harvard Medical School
Chair of Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery,
Massachusetts Eye and Ear
Massachusetts General Hospital



April 26, 2023

The Honorable Paul McMurtry
State House, Room 26
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Representative McMurtry,

On behalf of UMass Memorial Health, I am writing in support of House Bill 1094, *An Act expanding coverage of dental procedures*. As you know, many cancer survivors, particularly survivors of head or neck cancer, are confronted with oral complications that result directly from either the cancer itself and/or from its treatment, including chemotherapy and radiation therapy. Oral complications can include, but are not limited to, pain, infections, mouth sores, jaw dysfunction, difficulty swallowing, tooth decay, and gum disease. Physically, these complications may impact one's ability to eat and speak, while psychologically they can result in withdrawal, anxiety, and depression.

Dental and oral surgical interventions can become medically necessary as the result of these cancer-related complications, including oral surgery, and repair or replacement of teeth. Lack of insurance or inadequate scope of coverage, however, forces many patients to either pay out of pocket for these critical services that directly result from their cancer or cancer treatment, or bear with conditions that have a substantially debilitating impact upon their health and quality of life.

For these reasons, UMass Memorial Health supports your introduction of H. 1094, and commend you, your constituent Thomas Healy of Dedham, and the Massachusetts Oncology Patient Survivors and Supporters group (MOPSS) for prioritizing its enactment.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'James B. Leary', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

James B. Leary

THE RELENTLESS PURSUIT OF HEALING

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Tel: 774-442-2013
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James B. Leary, Esq.
Vice President, Government and Community Relations

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MGH Division of Dentistry

April 17, 2023

The Honorable Paul McMurtry
State House, Room 26
24 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Representative McMurtry:

We are writing in strong support of House Bill #1094, An Act Expanding Coverage of Dental Procedures, which would ensure access to dental care for medically related oral health conditions. As hospital-based dentists our entire careers, we have treated innumerable cases of patients with medical conditions that are direct causes of rapid and devastating deterioration of oral health. We view this legislation as critically important to the overall health of citizens of the Commonwealth.

It should be understood that a patient can have excellent oral health prior to medical treatment but suffer debilitating dental disease as a direct result of certain medical treatments and conditions. One example of this is graft versus host disease (GVHD), which is a complication of bone marrow transplantation. Oral complications of GVHD include oral mucositis, sclerosis, and hyposalivation, leading to pain, limitation in opening, nutritional deficiency, rampant decay, and infection. A second example is treatment for head and neck cancer. Surgery and radiation treatment to the head and neck can cause not only the same complications as GVHD, but also disfiguring oro-facial defects.

These are just two of the many medical conditions and treatments that can severely impact oral health and hence quality of life. Having treated these patients over decades, we consider access to essential dental care still lacking. Thank you for your efforts in promoting House Bill #1094, which can make a significant difference in the oral health of vulnerable citizens.

Jennifer Magee, DMD, MPH
Service Chief, MGH Dentistry

Agnes Lau, DMD
Chief Emerita, Division of Dentistry