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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

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SENATE RESOLUTION

PROCLAIMING FEBRUARY OF 2025, TO BE "CHILDREN'S DENTAL HEALTH MONTH"  
IN THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

Introduced By: Senator Alana DiMario

Date Introduced: February 03, 2025

Referred To: Placed on the Senate Consent Calendar

1           WHEREAS, The recognition of February as “Children's Dental Health Month” provides  
2 a month-long statewide dental health observance bringing together thousands of dedicated  
3 professionals, healthcare providers, and educators to promote the benefits of good oral health to  
4 children, their caregivers, teachers, and many others; and

5           WHEREAS, Children's teeth are meant to last a lifetime, and a healthy smile is important  
6 to a child's self-esteem. With proper care, a balanced diet and regular dental visits, their teeth can  
7 remain healthy and strong. Oral health is integral to overall health; and

8           WHEREAS, According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), tooth  
9 decay, also known as cavities, is the most common chronic childhood disease in the United States  
10 and the leading cause of missed school among children; and

11           WHEREAS, Sadly, kids with poor oral health are three times more likely to miss school  
12 and two times more likely to academically perform poorly; and

13           WHEREAS, For elementary students, 2.1 days of missed school were do to dental  
14 problems, and high school students missed 2.3 days due to dental issues; and

15           WHEREAS, Developing good habits at an early age and scheduling regular dental visits  
16 helps children to get a good start on a lifetime of healthy teeth and gums. Great oral health leads  
17 to more time in the classroom and better overall performance in school; and

18           WHEREAS, As of November of 2023, the average age of a dentist in Rhode Island is 62.  
19 Rhode Island must both train and invest in the entire dental team - dentists, dental hygienists,

1 dental assistants, dental office managers – along with health and human services leaders  
2 interested in oral health, to bring oral care to our residents; and

3 WHEREAS, Rhode Island has a “dentist to population ratio” that is the lowest of all the  
4 New England states and lower than the national average which impacts access and challenges  
5 exist in finding hygienists for dental offices. Promoting a career in dentistry for Rhode Islanders  
6 is critical and that programs that include dental careers such as CCRI, the new dental assisting  
7 training program at East Providence High School, and having exposure at a dental table at the  
8 recent Junior Achievement event are vital for the State; and

9 WHEREAS, Rhode Island should continue to explore innovative ways to bolster the  
10 dental workforce for the sake of the dental health of young and old; now, therefore be it

11 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island hereby urges all citizens and  
12 community organizations to observe February as National Children's Dental Health Month; and  
13 be it further

14 RESOLVED, That this Senate hereby proclaims February of 2025, to be “Children's  
15 Dental Health Month” in the State of Rhode Island; and be it further

16 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to  
17 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to Executive Director, Aaron Guckian, the Rhode  
18 Island Dental Association, Dr. Samuel Zwetchkenbaum, State Dental Director, Rhode Island  
19 Department of Health, Kathleen Macleod, Director at RI Dental Hygienist Association, and  
20 Andrew Gazerro, III, DMD, President of the RI Dental Association.

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