



## **2017-2018 OHAT Legislative Priorities**

### **Restore MassHealth Adult Dental Benefits: HD 1592** (Rep. Scibak & Sen. Chandler):

*An Act Relative to the Restoration of MassHealth Adult Dental Benefits* will restore full MassHealth adult dental benefits to more than 800,000 individuals, including 120,000 seniors and 180,000 people living with disabilities. Left untreated, dental disease can lead to systemic infection, hospitalization, and the worsening of other medical conditions. Oral health is an integral part of overall health and should be included in health coverage.

### **Improve the Children's Medical Security Program (CMSP): HD 2594/SD 467** (Rep. Malia & Sen. DiDomenico):

CMSP provides coverage to children who are ineligible for public programs and do not have access to private insurance through their parents. The program's strict annual caps on services including a \$750 cap on dental services result in inadequate care for children. *An Act Improving the Children's Medical Security Program and Simplifying the Administration Process* gives EOHS the flexibility to address the health needs of children by eliminating service caps, while remaining within the program's annual appropriation.

### **Pilot a Risk-Based Oral Health Model Statewide for Children on MassHealth: HD 1597/SD 941** (Rep. Scibak & Sen. Chandler):

Boston Children's Hospital has developed and tested a risk-based model for treatment of early childhood caries that is proven to reduce costs and improve patient outcomes. Piloted at over 30 sites nationwide, BCH's model offers more frequent preventive visits for high-risk children, including more frequent fluoride treatments and enhanced patient education. *An Act Relative to Early Childhood Cavities* will require EOHS to design a statewide pilot program through MassHealth to improve management of early childhood cavities, and recruit dental providers in both urban and rural areas to participate in the pilot.

### **Raising the Minimum Legal Age to 21 for the Sale of All Tobacco Products : HD 3668/SD 1353** (Rep. McMurtry & Sen. Lewis)

*An Act to Protect Youth from the Health Risks of Tobacco and Nicotine Addiction* raises the age from 18 to 21 at which a person may buy, and that a retail store may sell, cigarettes or other tobacco & nicotine products. Nicotine is highly addictive and adolescents and young adults are more susceptible to its negative effects because their brains are still developing. Therefore, raising the tobacco sale age to 21 delays the risk of when young people can first experiment with or begin using tobacco products. This may then decrease the risk of tobacco addiction as well as be potentially lifesaving. The positive public health implications of this bill are substantial.