

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 537

By Ramsey

A RESOLUTION to commend the Tennessee Department of Health for its Preventative Oral Health Initiatives.

WHEREAS, the mission of the Tennessee Department of Health (TDH) is to protect, promote, and improve the health and prosperity of people in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, good oral health is essential to overall health and impacts future economic opportunity for Tennessee's children; and

WHEREAS, the TDH is committed to prevention of disease including dental decay and operates on the fundamental principles of preventing and controlling disease through organized community efforts; and

WHEREAS, during times of limited resources, TDH is committed to providing primary dental disease prevention services with proven benefits and outcomes, making wise use of existing resources; and

WHEREAS, the Preventive Community Task Force, an independent group of public health professionals, recommends school-based sealant delivery programs and community water fluoridation based on irrefutable evidence of effectiveness in preventing tooth decay among children; and

WHEREAS, pit and fissure sealants have been studied for over forty years and have been found to be safe and effective in reducing the incidence of dental decay; and

WHEREAS, in 1972, the TDH became the first state to conduct pit and fissure sealants programs in school systems; and

WHEREAS, the TDH has provided to "at risk" children in public schools: 1.5 million dental screenings, over 3.1 million sealants on more than 558,000 children, conducted over

670,000 oral evaluations, and provided oral health education to more than 1.8 million "at risk" children in Tennessee since 2001; and

WHEREAS, fluoridation of community water supplies is the single most effective public health measure to prevent tooth decay; and

WHEREAS, all Surgeons General for the last fifty years have supported and recommended community water fluoridation, the most recent being U.S. Surgeon General Regina Benjamin, M.D. in April 2013; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has recognized community water fluoridation as one of the top ten public health achievements of the twentieth century; and

WHEREAS, community water fluoridation has produced recognized benefits in Tennessee as seen by a 75 percent decrease in decay from pre-fluoridation surveys conducted in the early 1950s to surveys conducted in the late 1980s; and

WHEREAS, in 1964, Tennessee became the first state to offer financial assistance to small communities in order to fluoridate their water systems; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting and proper that this General Assembly should pause to recognize and celebrate the efforts of the TDH to address dental disparities in Tennessee's underserved populations; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby commend and congratulate the Department of Health and the Division of Oral Health Services on their continued activities and successes in the areas of preventative oral health and disease prevention services.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we hereby recognize the current and former commissioners and staff for their commitment to serving the oral health needs of all citizens of the State of Tennessee through these noteworthy programs.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.