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AB-341 Oral Health for People with Disabilities Technical Assistance Center Program. (2025-2026)

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Assembly Bill No. 341

CHAPTER 612

An act to add Article 9 (commencing with Section 4698.50) to Chapter 6 of Division 4.5 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to developmental services.

[Approved by Governor October 11, 2025. Filed with Secretary of State October 11, 2025.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 341, Arambula. Oral Health for People with Disabilities Technical Assistance Center Program.

Existing law, the Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act, requires the State Department of Developmental Services to contract with regional centers to provide services and supports to individuals with developmental disabilities, including intellectual disabilities and other conditions, and their families. Under existing law, the regional centers purchase needed services and supports for individuals with developmental disabilities through approved service providers, or arrange for their provision through other publicly funded agencies. Existing law defines "services and supports for persons with developmental disabilities" to mean specialized services and supports or special adaptations of generic services and supports directed toward the alleviation of a developmental disability, or toward the social, personal, physical, or economic habilitation or rehabilitation of an individual with a developmental disability, or toward the achievement and maintenance of an independent, productive, and normal life. Under existing law, specialized medical and dental care are included within that definition.

This bill, subject to an appropriation by the Legislature, would require the department, no later than July 1, 2027, to contract with a public or private California dental school or college to administer the Oral Health for People with Disabilities Technical Assistance Center Program to improve dental care services for people with developmental and intellectual disabilities by reducing or eliminating the need for dental treatment using sedation and general anesthesia. The bill would require the department to prioritize contracting with a public California dental school or college to administer the program. The bill would authorize the contracted California dental school or college to partner with a public or private dental school or college, and would require the schools to meet certain criteria relating to location, accreditation, and a demonstrated record of working with regional centers. The bill would require the contracted school or partnership, among other responsibilities, to work with the department to engage up to 21 regional centers to participate, provide practical experience, systems development, and expertise in relevant subject areas, to train, monitor, and support regional center and oral health personnel, and to collect and analyze program data with the support of participating regional centers and oral health providers. The bill would require the department to submit an annual report of the collected data to the Legislature, and to provide guidance and establish protocols to support the program, among other things. The bill also would specify regional center duties, including identifying consumers who can benefit from the program, and establishing vendor agreements with interested oral health professionals.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: no

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(a) People with intellectual and developmental disabilities are often referred for dental treatment that relies on the use of sedatives and general anesthesia. This leads to longer wait times and increased costs. Because of this, people with intellectual and developmental disabilities are more likely to lack access to dental care and are disproportionately at risk of developing chronic dental illnesses.

(b) Chronic conditions associated with delayed dental care include depression, cardiovascular disease, respiratory infection, and adverse pregnancy outcomes.

(c) New developments in dental materials, dental procedures, and dental treatment delivery systems have created alternatives to the use of sedation and general anesthesia for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. These improvements can reduce risk, wait times, and cost, which all improve patient outcomes.

(d) Unfortunately, these alternatives are not widely available to those in need because of a lack of trained practitioners, policy barriers, and systemic deficiencies in payment and other support systems for practitioners who otherwise might provide care to this vulnerable population.

SEC. 2. Article 9 (commencing with Section 4698.50) is added to Chapter 6 of Division 4.5 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

Article 9. Oral Health for People with Disabilities Technical Assistance Center Program

4698.50. (a) No later than July 1, 2027, the State Department of Developmental Services shall contract with a public or private California dental school or college to administer the Oral Health for People with Disabilities Technical Assistance Center Program. The department shall prioritize contracting with a public California dental school or college to administer the program. The purpose of the program is to improve dental care services for people with developmental and intellectual disabilities by reducing or eliminating the need for dental treatment using sedation and general anesthesia. The contract shall expire on June 30, 2032.

(b) The contracted California dental school or college may partner with a public or private dental school or college. If the contracted California dental school or college elects to partner with another dental school or college, the contracted California dental school or college shall prioritize partnering with a public California dental school or college. The contracted school or resulting partnership shall collectively meet both of the following qualifications:

(1) All partner public or private schools shall be located in California and be approved by the Dental Board of California or the Commission on Dental Accreditation of the American Dental Association.

(2) Lead faculty at one or more schools shall demonstrate having developed and implemented at regional centers, community-based dental care programs that have achieved all of the following:

(A) Successfully used teledentistry-supported systems to bring dental care to people with developmental disabilities in community settings.

(B) Successfully reduced the number of people needing dental care using sedation or general anesthesia.

(C) Demonstrated improved oral health in community settings as the result of meeting the achievements described in subparagraphs (A) and (B).

(c) In administering the Oral Health for People with Disabilities Technical Assistance Center Program, the contracted school or partnership shall do all of the following:

(1) Work with the department to engage up to 21 regional centers to participate in the program.

(2) Provide practical experience, systems development, and expertise in relevant subject areas.

(3) Enlist dental offices and clinics to participate and establish teams of community-based allied personnel and dentists to work with each participating regional center.

(4) Design, implement, and support customized operational systems in each community in conjunction with the local oral health community and regional center personnel.

(5) Provide initial and ongoing training, monitoring, and support for participating oral health personnel, including, but not limited to, dental offices and clinics, and dentists and allied dental personnel.

(6) Provide initial and ongoing training, monitoring, and support for participating regional center personnel.

(7) Monitor and support the ongoing improvement and sustainability of operational systems at each regional center.

(8) Organize and direct a statewide advisory committee and learning community.

(9) Collect and analyze program data with the support of participating regional centers and oral health providers.

(d) Beginning one year after the contract described in subdivision (a) commences and until June 30, 2033, the department shall submit to the Legislature an annual report of the data described in paragraph (9) of subdivision (c), in accordance with Section 9795 of the Government Code.

(e) To implement this section, the department may enter into exclusive or nonexclusive contracts, or amend existing contracts, on a bid or negotiated basis. Contracts entered into or amended pursuant to this subdivision shall be exempt from Chapter 6 (commencing with Section 14825) of Part 5.5 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code, Part 2 (commencing with Section 10100) of Division 2 of the Public Contract Code, and the review or approval of the Department of General Services.

4698.51. Participating regional centers shall do all of the following:

(a) Designate a lead person at each regional center with responsibility for duties related to this article.

(b) Establish vendor agreements with interested oral health professionals.

(c) Identify people with intellectual and developmental disabilities who can benefit from the program, especially those who are already experiencing long wait times for dental care using sedation or general anesthesia, or those who are likely to experience long wait times in the future.

(d) Collect and store social, medical, and consent history and information necessary for a referral to a participating oral health professional.

(e) Facilitate referrals to participating oral health professionals.

(f) Monitor program and individual patient activity and progress.

4698.52. (a) The department shall do all of the following:

(1) Establish procedures for regional center directors, or their designees, to participate in the program.

(2) Provide guidance and establish protocols to support the program, including detailed clarification of payment for the various components of the program, workflow, and purchase-of-service authorizations and payments.

(3) Provide guidance for regional centers regarding the use of specialized therapeutic services payments.

(4) Provide guidance and technical assistance for regional centers to streamline the vendorization process for dental professionals.

(5) Allow regional centers to aggregate and publish anonymized results data.

(b) The department may consult and share information with other state entities as necessary to implement this article.

(c) The department may adopt other rules and regulations necessary to implement this article.

4698.53. Implementation of this article is subject to an appropriation by the Legislature for the purpose of this article.