



6737 W. Washington St., Suite 2360, West Allis, WI 53214

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FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:  
Matt Rossetto, Director of Government Services  
(608) 250-3442 | [mrossetto@wda.org](mailto:mrossetto@wda.org)

## **JOINT COMMITTEE ON FINANCE PROVIDES CRITICAL INVESTMENTS IN ORAL HEALTH**

*Dr. Patrick Tepe, a general dentist in Verona and president of the Wisconsin Dental Association, today released the following statement regarding the Joint Committee on Finance's vote to retain the Medicaid pilot program and increase investments in oral health for the state's most vulnerable residents.*

"We are grateful to the members of the Joint Finance Committee for their vote last night to increase funding to several important public health programs. Particularly exciting was their decision to increase funding by \$2.5 million for dental services for those with disabilities, along with expanding the Seal-A-Smile program. More non-profit clinics which serve primarily low-income populations, the elderly, and those on Medicaid will also now be eligible for state grants because of last night's vote."

"The most crucial decision the committee made last night was to continue the Medicaid pilot program in Brown, Marathon, Polk and Racine counties. We are pleased that the committee chose to follow the recommendation of the UW Population Health Institute report on the program, which called for a longer-term study in order to truly examine the overall effects of the rate increases in these counties. This decision also rewards the providers in those counties who chose to step up and either see more Medicaid patients, or begin to see them, in light of the more reasonable rates."

"The WDA and its 3,100-plus members are dedicated to quality oral health care for every Wisconsin resident, and we believe that the choices made in this budget will lead to positive outcomes for more of those most in need."

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*Established in 1870, the WDA's mission is to promote professional excellence and quality oral health care in Wisconsin. With over 70 percent of Wisconsin dentists being members, the Association is the leading voice for dentistry in the state. The WDA is affiliated with the American Dental Association - the largest and oldest national dental association in the world. For more information, call 414-276-4520, visit [WDA.org](http://WDA.org) and find us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Flickr](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#).*