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Please confirm your name

Delina DiSanto

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Telehealth services eliminate the need for in-person doctor's visits, can reduce the cost of healthcare, and help patients overcome barriers to care such as transportation, time, and availability of healthcare providers. Teledentistry, a subset of telehealth, has been present in Arizona since the mid-2000s but its progress has been slowed due to a lack of funding and support. Now more than ever, resources for teledentistry are crucial to allow patients easy access to meet with their dentist so they don't have to avoid putting off care, which can have disastrous physical and financial ramifications. Would you support federal funds to ensure the availability of telehealth and teledentistry to assist ongoing innovation for Arizona's dental workforce?

Yes

3

Please explain your answer

AZ04 is a rural district needing telehealth services.

4

Nearly 4.6 million Arizonans live in dental health professional shortage areas, defined as one dentist for 5,000 or more people. The entirety of Graham, Greenlee, La Paz, Santa Cruz, Apache, and Yuma counties are shortage areas, and all Arizona counties have sizable designated shortage areas. One way to increase access to care for Arizonans living in these areas is to recruit and retain qualified dental professionals. Federal and State Loan Forgiveness Programs have shown to be an effective way of recruiting health care providers, including dental professionals, to serve in rural and medically/dentally underserved areas. Applications for these programs have steadily increased in recent years and data shows that recipients often remain at their service sites after the contractual period has ended. Would you support increased federal funding for state loan forgiveness programs for dental professionals working in health professional shortage areas and medically underserved areas in Arizona?

Yes

5

Please explain your answer

La Paz and Yuma counties are in AZ04 and I see where we must have school loan forgiveness for healthcare professionals who want to work in these areas.

6

Oral health is crucial to the overall health and well being of seniors yet two-thirds of Medicare beneficiaries lack dental coverage and the costs of comprehensive dental care and/or private insurance coverage are often too high for individuals on fixed or limited incomes. Oral disease can also lead to increased adverse outcomes for chronic diseases, such as diabetes, and good oral health is crucial for successful surgeries, such as cardiac surgeries, organ transplants, and joint replacements. Without access to affordable oral health services, seniors are constantly pitting their financial well-being against their physical and mental health. Can we count on your support for adding a comprehensive dental benefit to Medicare?

Yes

7

Please explain your answer

I have seen seniors come into the Emergency Department with severe tooth decay and pain. Many with co-morbidities. I understand how dental care is pertinent for the total care of a patient.

8

What other actions would you take at the federal level to promote oral health equity?

We must have access to dental care for those who cannot afford these services. I believe we need more professionals in these rural areas to care for our low-income and working class income populations. I've seen the effects of poor dental hygiene on those who have put services off due to costs.

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Thank you for participating in the survey. To receive a record of your responses please provide your email.

delina@delinadisanto.com