

# STATE AND FEDERAL ADVOCACY TO PROTECT AND EXPAND MEDICAID ADULT DENTAL BENEFITS

Oral Health Pandemic Response Workgroup

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**DentaQuest**<sup>®</sup>  
Partnership  
for Oral Health Advancement

# ABOUT MEDICAID

Medicaid and CHIP cover 77.3M children and adults<sup>1</sup>

Federal law defines two categories of service: mandatory and optional<sup>2</sup>

✧ Mandatory – *inpatient/outpatient hospital services, nursing facility services, physician services, lab, xray services, family planning services, comprehensive medical services for children including dental, vision, and hearing, etc.*

✧ Optional – *prescription drugs, dental services for adults, podiatry services, chiropractic services, optometry services, prosthetics, etc.*

Financed jointly by Federal and State Governments

✧ Federal financing mechanism – Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP)

✧ State financing mechanisms – General Fund revenues, special health care funds/local government funds, provider taxes/assessments

As an optional benefit, adult dental benefits vary by state

<sup>1</sup> Source: [Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services](#)

<sup>2</sup> Source: [Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services](#)

## Medicaid Adult Dental Coverage by State\*

Dental Benefit Category	State
No Dental Benefit	3 states – AL, MD, TN
<i>Emergency-only</i> <i>Relief of pain under defined emergency situations (e.g., uncontrolled bleeding, trauma, injury, etc.).</i>	10 states – AZ, FL, GA, ME, MS, NV, NH <sup>1</sup> , OK, TX, UT
<b>Limited</b> <i>Fewer than 100 diagnostic, preventive, and minor restorative procedures recognized by the ADA; per-person annual expenditure cap is \$1,000 or less.</i>	18 states – AR, DE <sup>1</sup> , HI <sup>1</sup> , IN, KS, KY, LA, MI, MN, MO, NE, PA, SC, SD, VT, VA <sup>1</sup> , WV, WY
<b>Extensive</b> <i>A comprehensive mix of services, including more than 100 diagnostic, preventive, and minor and major restorative procedures recognized by the ADA; and there is no per-person annual expenditure cap or it is at least \$1,000.</i>	20 states – AK <sup>1</sup> , CA, CO, CT, DC, ID, IL, IA, MA, MT, NJ, NM, NY, NC, ND, OH, OR, RI, WA, WI

\*Source: [Medicaid Adult Dental Benefits: An Overview \(September 2019\)](#)

<sup>1</sup> Please note the following changes since publication: Alaska's adult dental benefit was restored effective 10/1/2019 and is now considered 'extensive;' Delaware initiated a 'limited' adult benefit effective 10/1/20; West Virginia initiated a 'limited' adult dental benefit effective 1/1/2021. Of additional note: Hawaii's Medicaid program offers an 'emergency-only' adult dental benefit although one of Hawaii's managed care organizations provide a value-added limited benefit to its enrollees at no cost to the state; New Hampshire offers an emergency-only adult dental benefit and is in the process of developing an extensive adult benefit; Virginia included funding in its state budget for an extensive benefit which is scheduled to take effect on July 1, 2021.

Dental Benefit Categories developed by the American Dental Association

# ORAL HEALTH DISPARITIES

## Dental Needs and Utilization

- ✧ Black adults are 68% more likely to have an unmet dental need than white adults.<sup>1</sup>
- ✧ Black adults are 22% less likely than white adults to have had a routine dental visit in the past year.<sup>1</sup>
- ✧ Latino adults are 52% more likely than white adults to report having difficulty performing at work due to poor oral health.<sup>1</sup>
- ✧ 93% of individuals living in poverty have unmet dental needs compared to 58% in high-income families.<sup>2</sup>
- ✧ 28% of individuals living in poverty utilized dental services compared to 55% in high-income families.<sup>2</sup>

## Coverage & Cost

- ✧ Nearly 4 in 10 Black and Latino adults reside in the states where Medicaid's adult dental benefits cover no dental services or emergency-only dental care.<sup>1</sup>
- ✧ The share of their income that low-income families spend on dental care is 10 times that of wealthier families.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Source: [New Oral Health Data Reflect Inequities, Barriers](#)

<sup>2</sup> Source: [Poor Families Spent Ten Times More of Their Income on Dental Care Than Wealthier Families \(Part I of III\)](#)

## ORAL HEALTH DISPARITIES (*continued*)

### Provider Availability

- ✧ 41% of Medicaid enrolled adults report that they did not visit a dentist within the last 12 months because they had trouble finding one.<sup>1</sup>
- ✧ A Medicaid enrolled adult visits an emergency room for a dental reason every 43 seconds in the United States, more than twice the rate of adults covered by private insurance (one visit every 95 seconds).<sup>2</sup>

### Oral Health and COVID-19

- ✧ Chronic disease comorbidities are risk factors for poor oral health and COVID-19. For those hospitalized with the virus, mechanical ventilation may be necessary. Once ventilated, some patients will acquire Ventilator-Associated Pneumonia (VAP).
  - ▶ VAP is the second most common hospital-acquired infection
  - ▶ Black people were 39% more likely than white people to be diagnosed with VAP
  - ▶ Patients with one comorbidity are 73% more likely to have a VAP diagnoses compared to those with none, while patients with two or more are 98% more likely than those with none
  - ▶ Preventive dental visits decrease the likelihood of acquiring VAP, with at least one preventive dental visit within 3 years reducing the likelihood of a VAP diagnosis by 22%

<sup>1</sup> Source: [Oral Health and Well-Being in the United States](#)

<sup>2</sup> Source: [Healthy Mouths: Why They Matter for Adults and State Budgets](#)

## WORK AT THE STATE AND FEDERAL LEVEL – *Challenges*

### ✧ Ongoing budget pressures due to COVID-19 Pandemic

- ▶ Majority of states are constitutionally mandated to have balanced budgets
- ▶ Optional benefits – such as dental – are often the first targeted for cuts when budgets are strained
- ▶ Threat of reducing provider reimbursement rates

### ✧ Recent Interim Final Rule on Maintenance of Effort

- ▶ November 2, 2020 - Trump Administration issued an interim final rule that, effective immediately, permits states to cut Medicaid benefits (such as dental) during the national public health emergency without losing enhanced FMAP available during the emergency.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Source: [Trump Administration Reverses Course on Medicaid Maintenance of Effort Provisions, Clearing the Way for Devastating Cuts in the Midst of the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

## WORK AT THE STATE AND FEDERAL LEVEL – *Opportunities*

- ✧ New round of COVID-19 relief legislation expected
  - ▶ OPEN has called for a 12% increase in general FMAP funding and a 5% increase in FMAP for adult dental services
- ✧ Possible reversal of Interim Final Rule
  - ▶ OPEN has called for an immediate reversal of this rule to ensure Medicaid adult dental benefits are not cut during the Pandemic emergency
- ✧ Adult dental services as a mandatory service
  - ▶ OPEN is calling on Congress to pass legislation to make dental services for adults a mandatory benefit so states will have to include it in their Medicaid programs
- ✧ Possible extension of post-partum coverage
  - ▶ Bi-partisan support for legislation allowing states to extend postpartum Medicaid coverage, including dental coverage, from the current 60 days to 12 months
- ✧ New state legislative sessions have begun/will soon begin
  - ▶ Advocates will be strengthening existing and building new relationships with legislative champions
  - ▶ Advocates will advance messaging that oral health is part of a strong response to COVID and key to the health and economic recovery of our communities

## WORK AT THE STATE AND FEDERAL LEVEL – *Reasons for hope*

### At the federal level

- ✧ New Administration with interest in strengthening Medicaid
- ✧ Advocates preparing for OPEN Virtual Hill Day

### At the state level

- ✧ 3 states expanded/initiated Medicaid adult dental benefit offerings in 2020<sup>1</sup>
  - ▶ Delaware, Virginia, West Virginia
- ✧ 4 states defended Medicaid adult dental benefit or restored previously cut benefits in 2020<sup>2</sup>
  - ▶ California, Colorado, Massachusetts, Nevada
- ✧ At least 9 states are actively pursuing expansions of their Medicaid adult dental benefit offerings in 2021
  - ▶ Arizona, Hawaii, Florida, Kansas, Maine, Michigan, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Texas

<sup>1</sup> Delaware's new limited adult benefit took effect 10/1/2020; Virginia's new extensive adult benefit will take effect 7/1/2021; West Virginia's new limited adult benefit took effect 1/1/2021.

<sup>2</sup> California, Colorado, and Nevada defended their adult benefits from cuts while Massachusetts restored coverage for root canals and crowns.



# PARTNERS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENGAGEMENT

## Partners

- ✧ Oral Health Progress and Equity Network (OPEN)
- ✧ National advocacy organizations (Families USA, Community Catalyst)
- ✧ State oral health coalitions<sup>1</sup>
- ✧ State level members, affiliates, and chapter organizations

## Opportunities

- ✧ Become a member of OPEN
- ✧ OPEN Policy Summit and Virtual Hill Day (February 9-11, 2021)<sup>2</sup>
- ✧ Advance messaging that oral health is key to a strong response to COVID-19 and the health and economic recovery of our communities and country
- ✧ Engage with state and local coalitions to defend and/or expand Medicaid adult dental benefits
- ✧ Engage CMS by monitoring waivers and encouraging development of guidance that supports strong Medicaid child and adult dental programs
- ✧ Sign up for Families USA and Community Catalyst email alerts

<sup>1</sup> Please visit [American Network of Oral Health Coalitions \(ANOHC\)](#) to find the oral health coalition in your state.

<sup>2</sup> Registration for the [2021 OPEN Policy Summit](#). If you are not already an OPEN member, [join here](#) and click the “sign in” button.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

DQP Research Brief: [New NHANES Oral Health Data Reflect Inequities, Barriers](#)

DQP communications Brief: [Healthy Mouths: Why They Matter for Adults and State Budgets.pdf](#)  
([dentaquestpartnership.org](http://dentaquestpartnership.org))

American Dental Association Health Policy Institute: [Oral Health and Well-Being \(national and state level data\)](#)

Community Catalyst: [Why Does Oral Health Matter?](#)

Families USA Issue Brief: [Interim Final Rule on Maintenance of Effort](#)

Families USA Webinar: [2020 Election's Impact on Medicaid](#)

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services: [Interim Final Rule](#)

Families USA Messaging Guide: [United for Health: Messages that bridge the political divide to finish the job on health reform](#)



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for Oral Health Advancement

**THANK YOU!**

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The DentaQuest Partnership for Oral Health Advancement is a nonprofit organization working to transform the broken health care system and enable better health through oral health.