



Virginia Oral Health Coalition Update March 2017

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Upcoming Meetings & Free Trainings

April 6 | Oakton

Northern Virginia Oral Health Steering Committee Meeting
[RSVP](#)

April 13 | Newport News

Oral Health in Pregnancy and Early Childhood
[REGISTER](#)

May 10 | Glen Allen

Unconscious Bias
Explore issues related to health equity and unconscious bias
[REGISTER](#)

May 11 | Farmville

Community Conversation: Oral Health Care for Individuals with Special Health Care Needs
[REGISTER](#)

May 12-13 | Farmville

Practical Guide to Treating Dental Patients with Special Health Care Needs
[REGISTER](#)

GOP Pulls the American Health Care Act

Congressional Republicans pulled the American Health Care Act (AHCA) before it could be considered by the House last Friday, because they did not have enough votes to pass. The AHCA legislation intended to repeal major pieces of the Affordable Care Act and severely [reduce funding for Medicaid](#). If the AHCA had become law, Virginia's Medicaid program would have faced steep cuts, leaving some health care services - including oral health - at tremendous risk.

Nationally, the AHCA would have caused 26 million Americans to lose coverage by 2026.

Now that the AHCA is over, what does this mean for Virginia?

Grassroots advocacy works.

Congressional Republicans heard loud and clear from their constituents that this legislation was bad for Americans' health and our economy.

Each of you who took the time to share information or contact a representative is responsible for protecting coverage and defeating the legislation. We should all celebrate this effort!

And, vigilance is necessary.

After a deep breath, we must continue to educate ourselves and our elected officials about the health and economic benefits of affordable, comprehensive health care that is inclusive of oral health. While the AHCA did not pass, there will be other efforts to change Medicaid and revisit how health care is accessed and provided in the U.S.

Of note, Congress has not addressed FAMIS funding (known as "CHIP" federally); this funding will expire in September and, without it, over 104,000 children and 4,000 pregnant women will likely [lose medical and dental coverage](#).

The Virginia Oral Health Coalition staff and board

May 15 | Glen Allen
School Age Oral Health
Workgroup Meeting
[RSVP](#)

June 13 | Glen Allen
Early Dental Home Workgroup
Meeting
[RSVP](#)

November 2 | Richmond
2017 Virginia Oral Health
Summit
Save the date


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Please take a moment and
support the Coalition's work.

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to find out if your gift can be
matched.

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will work with our partners to share data, research, and information so that we are all prepared to continue efforts to protect and expand access to affordable, comprehensive health care that is inclusive of oral health. We will also thank our Virginia representatives who opposed the AHCA because it limited coverage for Virginians; this includes all of Virginia's Democratic representatives as well as Republican representatives Barbara Comstock and Rob Wittman. Representatives Dave Brat and Tom Garrett also opposed the AHCA; they indicated it was too generous in its support for underserved populations.

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Dental Coverage Remains at Risk

The AHCA may be over, but threats to Medicaid dental benefits, CHIP coverage and Affordable Care Act provisions for early childhood dental care still remain. [This CNN article](#), written hours before the AHCA was pulled, highlights how a Medicaid block grant model and removal of Essential Health Benefits stand to greatly reduce dental coverage for children and adults who rely on Medicaid and CHIP (Virginia's "FAMIS") coverage. In Virginia, Medicaid and FAMIS provide comprehensive dental benefits to children and pregnant women and a limited emergency dental benefit for other enrolled adults.



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Of Interest

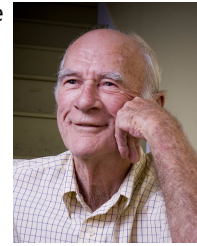
Oral Health and Overall Health

Oral health and overall health are fundamentally intertwined. The following articles present current information on how oral health is connected to overall health and well-being.

- [Dentists Work to Ease Patients' Pain with Fewer Opioids](#) (NPR)
- [Missing Teeth May be Risk Factor for Dementia](#) (Dr. Bicuspid)
- [How to Boost the Oral Health of Latino Kids](#) (Dr. Bicuspid)

Dentistry Advocates Aim for Medicare-paid Dental Care

One in five seniors over 65 have untreated tooth decay - yet, just 12 percent have dental insurance. In response, a nonprofit think tank called The Santa Fe Group is setting its sights on adding dental benefits to Medicare by building public demand and raising awareness among policy holders. [Read the full story from Kaiser Health News.](#)



Virginia Health Care Foundation Offers Free SignUpNow Trainings

The Virginia Health Care Foundation (VHCF) is offering SignUpNow trainings across Virginia this Spring to equip those who work with parents and caregivers with information about affordable health insurance for kids and families. [Visit the VHCF website](#) to find a training near you, or call 804.828.6062.

Southside Virginia Dental Care Event Needs Volunteers

Remote Area Medical (RAM) will provide a free dental care event [June 24-25 in Emporia, Virginia](#). If you'd like to volunteer to provide care, [click here](#) or [view this flyer](#).

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