



Virginia Health Catalyst Advocacy Postcards: Instructions

Thank you for your support in advocating for a comprehensive dental benefit. Below are a few instructions on using the postcards at your upcoming meetings. If you have any questions please contact Lauren Sawyer at lsawyer@vahealthcatalyst.org

1. Print the postcards below, use double-sided printing along the short edge. Or contact Virginia Health Catalyst to mail postcards directly to you.
2. At your next meeting, have partners complete the postcards by adding a personal message on the back of the postcard. Sample messages are provided in the download, but partners are encouraged to write their own messages as well!
3. To ensure postcards are delivered to each person's legislator, partners can either add their home address to the return line and Virginia Health Catalyst can address the postcards, or partners can find their legislator at whosmy.virginiageneralassembly.gov by typing in their home address.
4. Mail the completed postcards back to Virginia Health Catalyst using the return envelope Catalyst provided when mailing you the postcards.
5. Share your support for an adult dental benefit on social media and be sure to tag Virginia Health Catalyst on Twitter at @VaOralHealth!



Virginia Health Catalyst Advocacy Postcards: Sample Messages

Thank you for your support in advocating for a comprehensive dental benefit. Below are sample messages for each of the four postcards. On the back of each postcard consider adding one of the below messages, OR include your own message!

Older adults:

- All Virginians no matter their age have a right to the health care they need to be happy and healthy. Please support an adult dental benefit in Medicaid.
- Seniors with poor oral health can experience social isolation and difficulty eating, making it harder to lead a happy and healthy life. Please support an adult dental benefit in Medicaid.
- As a member of the health care community, I see firsthand the impact poor oral health has on our older adults. We can't expect Virginians to be healthy without a healthy mouth. Please support an adult dental benefit in Medicaid.

Children:

- Virginia's kids deserve the best chance for a healthy life, and that means having parents who have access to oral health services too. Please support an adult dental benefit in Medicaid.
- As a member of the health care community, I see firsthand the impact a parent's health has on the health of their family. Please support an adult dental benefit in Medicaid.
- Every family in Virginia has a right to the health care they need, and that includes oral health. Please support an adult dental benefit in Medicaid.

Substance Use Disorder:

- Virginians should have every opportunity to improve their health, and that means addressing their oral health needs. Please support an adult dental benefit in Medicaid.
- As a member of the health care community, I see firsthand the impact oral health has on a person's ability to get and stay healthy. Please support an adult dental benefit in Medicaid.
- All Virginians should have access to the health care services they need to be happy and healthy, and that includes oral health. Please support an adult dental benefit in Medicaid.

Cost:

- A dental benefit will not only reduce health care costs for Virginians, but it will also reduce costs for the Commonwealth. Please support an adult dental benefit in Medicaid.
- Adding a dental benefit will keep Virginians out of the emergency department and reduce costs. Please support an adult dental benefit in Medicaid.
- As a member of the health care community, I see firsthand the burden patients face when it comes to health care costs. Please support an adult dental benefit in Medicaid.

Individuals with Special Health Care Needs:

- As a member of the health care community, I see firsthand the need for dental benefit among patients with special health care needs. Please support an adult dental benefit in Medicaid.
- Virginians with special health care needs deserve the same opportunity for good overall health, and that means access to oral health care. Please support an adult dental benefit in Medicaid.
- Adding a dental benefit for all adults enrolled in Medicaid means Virginians with special health care needs can access the oral health care they need to improve their overall health. Please support an adult dental benefit in Medicaid.

I support an adult dental benefit in Medicaid!

VIRGINIA MEDICAID COVERS **THREE-FIFTHS** OF ALL NURSING HOME RESIDENTS BUT DOES NOT OFFER A DENTAL BENEFIT.

- **50%** of Virginia adults have lost at least one tooth because of tooth decay or gum disease.
- **Over half** of Virginia's older adults cite dental care as their most frequent unmet need.

Please show your support for older adults by supporting a comprehensive dental benefit for adults enrolled in Medicaid.



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PARENTS WITH DENTAL COVERAGE ARE MORE LIKELY TO TAKE THEIR CHILDREN TO SEE A DENTIST. **ADDING AN ADULT DENTAL BENEFIT TO MEDICAID CAN IMPROVE THE HEALTH OF CHILDREN IN VIRGINIA.**

- Tooth decay is the most common chronic disease among children, **5 times** more common than asthma.
- Students in Virginia miss **1 million hours** of school each year because of dental problems.

Please show your support for improving the health of families in Virginia by supporting a comprehensive dental benefit for adults enrolled in Medicaid.



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ADDING AN ADULT DENTAL BENEFIT IN MEDICAID WILL SAVE MONEY BY TREATING ORAL HEALTH NEEDS EARLY.

- When a person with diabetes treats their gum disease, they save **\$2,840** on medical costs annually.
- Virginia Medicaid spent **\$3.3 MILLION DOLLARS** on avoidable emergency department visits for dental issues.

By supporting a comprehensive dental benefit for adults enrolled in Medicaid we can save the Commonwealth money.



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AN ADULT DENTAL BENEFIT CAN **REDUCE OPIOID PRESCRIPTIONS** AND IMPROVE TREATMENT FOR SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS.

- Individuals receiving treatment for substance use disorders who had access to oral health care were **twice as likely** to abstain from drug use and be employed on discharge.
- **56%** of Medicaid beneficiaries who visited the emergency department for dental issues filled an opioid prescription within 30 days.

By supporting an adult dental benefit in Medicaid we can help fight the opioid epidemic in Virginia.



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- One study found **80%** of individuals with special health care needs had gum disease.
- Virginians with special health care needs have **poor access to dental care** and higher rates of chronic

Please show your support for improving the health of Virginians with developmental disabilities by supporting a comprehensive dental benefit for adults enrolled in Medicaid.



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