



Monthly Update

July 2019

Join 70+ Organizations In Supporting An Adult Dental Benefit

In a letter to Virginia Governor Ralph Northam and Secretary of Health and Human Services Daniel Carey, [70+ Virginia organizations](#) are urging the administration to include funding for a comprehensive adult dental benefit in Medicaid, in the 2020-2022 biennial budget. Virginia Medicaid does not currently cover comprehensive dental services, like cleanings, fillings, and root canals, for all adult enrollees. Join us in advocating for this crucial benefit by [signing on](#) to the letter.

Dental care is a major unmet need for newly-eligible Medicaid recipients, according to Dr. Jennifer Lee, director of the Department of Medical Assistance Services (the state Medicaid agency). Adding a comprehensive dental benefit will improve chronic disease management and keep individuals out of the emergency department, resulting in better health and cost-savings. Additionally, a benefit will support the Commonwealth's dental safety net by providing a much-needed revenue source; dental care is one of the costliest services provided by community health centers and free or charitable clinics.

There's more work ahead to ensure a comprehensive dental benefit is added in

Upcoming Events

Regional Oral Health Alliance Meetings

August 12 | [Greater Richmond & Petersburg Alliance Safety Net Workgroup Meeting](#)

Committee Meetings

September 9 | [School-Based Health Committee Meeting](#) This is a new statewide committee to identify and spread best practices for school-based health care, including sealants.

Coalition Wide Events

November 7 | [2019 Oral Health Summit](#)

Donate today to help ensure all Virginians have access to equitable healthcare that includes oral health:

[Donate](#)

Virginia, show your organization's support by [signing on](#) to our letter today.



Oral Health News & Resources

Virginians See Cost as a Major Barrier to Receiving Care



Despite Medicaid expansion, adults still see cost as a barrier to care, according to the Virginia Consumer Healthcare Experience State Survey. In fact, [46% of respondents](#) said they delayed care due to cost. Health and community providers can help improve consumer access to care by sharing information about Medicaid coverage and clinic locations. Taking the time to understand what prevents a person from accessing care, whether it's cost, transportation, or language, to name a few, can help tailor your approach to meet each patient's needs.

New Report Provides Recommendations for Improving Oral Health and Chronic Disease Among Older Adults

To better help state and local health programs address the oral health needs of older adults with chronic disease, the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors' ProVention Health Foundation convened a roundtable to provide recommendations on integrating care. The report highlights strategies to improve data collection, increase funding, and elevate oral health in state plans and policies. Read the report [here](#).



Thought Leader Roundtable on Oral Health and Chronic Disease in Older Adults

Summary Report and Key Recommendations

Study Finds Links Between Sugar-Sweetened Beverages and Higher Cancer Risk



A [new report](#) out this month found drinking sugar-sweetened beverages, like soda or juice, may be associated with a higher risk of cancer. These findings highlight the important role the health community can play in curbing consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages and replacing them with fluoridated water. Share with patients and community members the importance of drinking fluoridated water, especially during these hot summer months!

Good Oral Health Can Reduce Risk for Pneumonia

For patients with conditions like dysphagia, a condition that impairs a person's ability to swallow, treating their oral health proactively can improve health outcomes and reduce the risk of complications like pneumonia. A new article takes a look at the importance of educating long term care and hospital staff on the importance of good oral hygiene for patients and how addressing potential oral health issues early on can improve health outcomes and save a patient's life. Learn more about the opportunities to educate staff, and the role oral health plays in health conditions [here](#).



Household Cooling Assistance



Did you know the Department of Social Services (DSS) can help vulnerable households stay cool during the summer heat? Individuals may apply online or at a local DSS office for assistance with electricity bills and/or equipment purchase or repair; applications are accepted through August 15 ([view more info](#)). Visit the [Energy Assistance \(EA\) website](#) to learn about all EA programs.

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