



Virginia  
Health Catalyst  
The Intersection of Overall  
Health and Oral Health

# Monthly Update September 2019

The Virginia Oral Health Coalition is now Virginia Health Catalyst. Learn more about the next phase of work in a [message from our CEO](#).

## Measuring Oral Health Success to Improve Outcomes

The Uniform Data System (UDS) is the standardized reporting system used annually by every federally qualified health center to report data, such as dental sealant rates, and assist in measuring outcomes.

### Potential changes to UDS:

HHS, and HRSA (the Health Resources and Services Administration) are considering changes to the measures used in UDS. Of particular interest to Virginia Health Catalyst and its partners are changes to:

- **Sealant Measure:** Currently, UDS measures the percentage of children age 6-9 who have received dental sealants, but HHS and HRSA have proposed replacing this metric with a fluoride varnish application measure. Dental sealants are a thin plastic coating that acts as a barrier to prevent tooth decay and are an incredibly effective and inexpensive way to prevent cavities; in Virginia, 52% of third graders have a sealant. **Virginia Health Catalyst and its partners recommend maintaining the current measure for dental sealants.**
- **Diabetes Measures:** As part of the proposed changes, HHS and HRSA are considering adding additional diabetes measures to

## Upcoming Events

### Regional Oral Health Alliance Meetings

November 15 | [Northern Virginia Alliance Adult's Oral Health Workgroup Meeting](#)

### Committee Meetings

October 17 | [Early Dental Home Committee Meeting](#)

October 21 | [School-Based Health Committee Meeting](#)

### Coalition Wide Events

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

**Join the Office of the Secretary of Health and Human Resources this fall at Maternal Health Listening Sessions across Virginia. Learn more, and find an event near you [here](#).**

Donate today to help ensure all Virginians have access to

include eye and foot exams and screenings for nephropathy. While these measures are important, patients with diabetes cannot fully control their A1C levels without good oral health. **For that reason, Virginia Health Catalyst and its partners recommend adding an oral health screening to the diabetes measures.**

equitable health care that includes oral health:

**Donate**



Our friends at The National Network for Oral Health Access [submitted a comment](#) regarding the potential changes, which Virginia Health Catalyst endorsed.

### **What can I do to improve oral health metrics in Virginia?**

In Virginia, advocates can join one of Virginia Health Catalyst's [statewide committees](#), like the [School-Based Health Workgroup](#) that is identifying and implementing initiatives to improve sealant rates, or a [regional oral health alliance](#) which are improving population health outcomes through population-specific workgroups. In clinical settings, providers and staff can take steps to integrate care and measure its impact in their work.

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## **Oral Health News & Resources**

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### **Kaiser Family Foundation Recommends Ways to Improve Oral Health Care in Medicare, Including Adding Dental Benefit**



In Virginia, over a million people are enrolled in Medicare, the federal health care program for older adults and individuals with disabilities. Currently, Medicare does not offer a comprehensive dental benefit; however, in a new report, the Kaiser Family Foundation offers five potential oral health care options including adding a dental benefit to Medicare. View the full brief [here](#).

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### **Report Finds Sugary Drinks Linked to Increased Risk of Death from All Causes**

A [new report](#) studied the long term health impacts of sugary drinks and found

that consuming sugar sweetened beverages increased mortality rates, even among participants with a healthy weight. To help providers, community health workers, and home visitors improve the health of their clients, Virginia Health Catalyst created a [white paper](#) on strategies to encourage individuals to drink fluoridated water.



#### ENCOURAGING VIRGINIANS TO WIN WITH TAP WATER



An issue brief prepared by  
Virginia Health Catalyst

August 2019  
vhealthcatalyst.org

## Annual Survey Finds Family Health Premiums on the Rise



In its annual employer health benefits survey, the Kaiser Family Foundation found on average, family health care premiums now exceed \$20,000. With an annual deductible doubling the average from a decade ago these higher health care costs could impact a family's choices of dental coverage. Learn more about the report and its complete findings [here](#).

## Join OPEN Network for Oral Health Resources

Join us as a member of the **Oral Health Progress and Equity Network (OPEN)**, the next generation of what you may remember as the DentaQuest Foundation's Oral Health 2020 network. This online community connects over 2,000 members nationwide who share best practices and resources, advocate for health policies, and learn about health equity and social justice. Virginia Health Catalyst was one of the founding network members; OPEN shares Catalyst's mission of ensuring all people have access to quality health care. [Click here](#) to learn more and sign up to join OPEN today!



## Registration is Open for Rev Your Bev Day on November 13



On November 13, join health advocates around the Commonwealth for Rev Your Bev Day. This annual event is a great opportunity to encourage Virginia's kids to fuel up with water. Earlier this year, we [highlighted](#) the value of events like Rev Your Bev as a way for communities, families, and schools to promote drinking fluoridated water. [Register](#) to take part in this great event!

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