



South Dakota

DENTAL ASSOCIATION

Opening the Door to Dental Care

Few of the 150,000 South Dakotans covered by Medicaid visit the dentist. **Just 34%** accessed dental care in 2022; 41% of kids and 20% of adults.

Why was access so low? Primarily because reimbursement rates stagnated for a decade and were below the cost of overhead in most dental offices. **Enrollment** and re-enrollment issues were also barriers for many dental practices.

What's new: There is a fresh opportunity for dental offices to reengage in the Medicaid program and provide care to more patients covered by Medicaid:

- **Reimbursement rates** have increased to 70% of average billed charges.
- **Provider enrollment** wait times have also been nearly eliminated by the Dept. of Social Services.
- **Annual maximums** have been raised to \$2,000.
- **Benefit enhancements**, including sealants on primary teeth and extraction of third molars.

Why it matters: Dental care is essential health care and oral health is a primary component of overall health. **Expanding access** to care for patients covered by Medicaid demonstrates SDDA members' commitment to providing care for all people in South Dakota.

How it starts: "Opening the Door to Dental Care" is a statewide campaign proposed by the South Dakota Dental Association to encourage increased provider participation in Medicaid.

- **The campaign's focus** is on provider engagement and recruitment, enrollment support, and patient access. Plan details are shown below in this document.
- Adding one person per week, or one family of four each month, to each dentist's patient base would address the dental care needs of those with Medicaid coverage by the end of 2024.
- **Between the lines:** It also supports continued success of current independent practice models and their place in healthy South Dakota communities.

Initiative Goal:

Increase the number of Medicaid enrollees receiving dental services by approximately 10,000 adults and 15,000 children within the next five years.

The South Dakota Dental Association will pursue a three-pronged approach to expanding access to care within the private dental provider system of care:

1. A Campaign to Encourage Dentists to Include Medicaid Acceptance as a Component of Practice.

- a. Establish a profession-wide educational campaign to increase awareness of expanded reimbursement opportunities available to dental practices. The campaign will utilize three messages:
 1. Dental care is an essential healthcare service that all people need, but only dentists can provide.
 2. Providing dental care for people with Medicaid benefits will maintain a positive practice environment in South Dakota while reducing the likelihood of encroachment into the dental profession by others.
 3. Dentists can build a successful practice while providing care for people with Medicaid benefits.
- b. Establish a campaign, targeting dentists currently enrolled in Medicaid to open their practice to additional people with Medicaid benefits.
 - i. Segment the effort by targeted: geographic areas, practice types, those that have recently reduced patients, closed to new patients, dropped enrollment, etc.
 - ii. Identify opportunities for dental practices to become the designated dental provider for patients associated with partner organizations (see 2.f. below).
 - iii. Utilize opinion leaders and influencers in a peer-to-peer campaign.
- c. Establish a targeted campaign to recruit dentists to enroll in the Medicaid Program and open their practice to patients enrolled in the Medicaid Program.
 - i. Target newly practicing dentists and those seeking to build or expand their practice.
 - ii. Utilize opinion leaders and influencers in a peer-to-peer campaign.
- d. Develop and provide scenario-based examples of benefits for dental providers who incorporate Medicaid patients into their dental practice model.
- e. Provide workshops and continuing education opportunities to demonstrate “opportunities” for practices opening to patients enrolled in Medicaid.

2. Actively Support Dental Practices to Achieve and Maintain Medicaid Enrollment.

- a. Advocate for effective and streamlined enrollment processes for dentists.
- b. Advocate for a “help line” resource for dental practices to:
 - i. provide navigation assistance in the Medicaid enrollment process.
 - ii. answer questions asked as dental practices consider adding Medicaid reimbursement to their patient care mix.
- c. Provide professional development/education for dental practices to support successful engagement of patients enrolled in Medicaid presenting for care.
- d. Utilize the Delta Dental “hot line” for patients to receive a referral to dental office open to new Medicaid patients.
- e. Utilize care coordinators and other community health workers to assist patients in accessing dental care.

- f. Engage partner organizations to help practices solicit patients who do not have a dental home. Partners could include: care coordinators, community health workers, community service providers, Head Starts, mobile programs, social service agencies and non-profit organizations.

3. Document Access to Care for Medicaid Enrollees and the Associated Dental and Health Benefits and Efficacy Health Care, including qualitative and quantitative data.

- a. Establish a baseline of current statewide and local utilization of Medicaid dental benefits by patients enrolled in the Medicaid Program.
- b. Establish a baseline of current statewide and local enrolled providers.
- c. Engage with public health and advocacy partners to measure expanding levels of patients identifying a dental home, utilizing restorative and preventative dental care.

Methodology:

Using a combination of SDDA staff, outside experts and partner agencies and organizations, to carry out each step of the initiative design to include some or all of the following:

- a. Educational materials for the dental provider community.
- b. Help line for dental practices wanting to seek understanding of Medicaid as a practice component and/or to enroll in the program.
- c. Hot line for patients seeking an appointment.
- d. Targeted provider promotion program to seek and actively recruit providers to meet demand and geographic access goals.
- e. Data collection and analysis resources to formally measure access and continuity of preventative and intervention care by individuals enrolled in Medicaid statewide.

Budget:	Cost Projections	2023	2024
	Education/CE	\$ 6,000	\$ 5,000
	Promotion	\$ 4,000	\$ 1,000
	Advisory Comm	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
	Travel	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
	Event Hosting	<u>\$ 3,000</u>	<u>\$ 2,000</u>
	TOTAL	\$15,000	\$10,000

Budget Narrative:

The budget for the initiative reflects the costs associated with retaining presenters to deliver workshops and continuing education, hiring outside professionals for the delivery of promotional messaging and materials, and hosting local educational and informational events for dentists and dental office managers. The SDDA will seek financial support from the American Dental Association as well as other advocacy partners, but funds from the SDDA’s permanent reserves will likely be needed for the bulk of the cost of the initiative. The SDDA will seek in-kind support from Delta Dental of South Dakota and the Department of Social Services for enrollment support, hotline support and data collection and evaluation.