Coverage of Medicaid Dental Benefits for Adults

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Overview

• The impact of poor oral health
• Dental coverage
• Current adult dental benefits in Medicaid
• Recent trends in dental benefits
• Use of dental care
• Current and possible future Commission work
The Impact of Poor Oral Health

- 85% of adults age 18+ are affected by dental caries (cavities)
- Adults with incomes <100% FPL more than 3 times as likely to have untreated dental caries as those with incomes >400% FPL
- May be cause and consequence of several conditions
- Other negative effects
Percentage of Adults Ages 19 to 64 Who Have Private Dental Coverage, Public Dental Coverage, or No Dental Coverage by Income, 2012

Note: FPL is federal poverty level.
Types of Services Offered under Medicaid Adult Dental Benefits, as of February 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of service</th>
<th>Number of states</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Only</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More extensive</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preventive</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restorative</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Periodontal</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dentures</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Surgery</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthodontia</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Federal Medicaid regulation defines dental services as “diagnostic, preventive, or corrective procedures provided by or under the supervision of a dentist in the practice of his profession, including the treatment of – (1) the teeth and associated structures of the oral cavity; and (2) disease, injury, or impairment that may affect the oral or general health of the recipient” (42 CFR §440.100).

Source: MACPAC analysis of state Medicaid websites, provider manuals, billing manuals, and informational pamphlet.
Medicaid Dental Benefits for Adults by State, as of February 2015

Source: MACPAC analysis of state Medicaid websites, provider manuals, billing manuals, and informational pamphlet.

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Recent Trends in Dental Benefits

Between 2003 and 2012:

• 7 states increased from emergency only or no coverage to more comprehensive coverage
• 3 states decreased from more comprehensive coverage to emergency only
• 10 states experienced more than one change, both increasing and decreasing

Use of Dental Care

• Dental care utilization is lower than other medical care for people across all income levels

• Use of dental services among Medicaid enrollees and low-income populations is particularly low

• For Medicaid enrollees, two possible reasons are:
  • Medicaid does not cover dental care in many states
  • The inability to find a provider who takes Medicaid
Current and Possible Future MACPAC Work

• Current:
  • Updating dental measures in MACStats and looking at changes over time
  • Focus groups with dually eligible beneficiaries

• Possible Future Work:
  • Use of emergency room for dental services
  • Environmental scan of provider network issues