

2024 Accomplishments



Federal Advocacy

IMPROVING THE ORAL HEALTH WORKFORCE

- Advanced Action for Dental Health Legislation out of the House of Representatives, which addresses workforce development and the dental health needs of underserved populations.
- Worked in a Coalition to develop the Bipartisan Primary Care and Health Workforce Act, which would improve access to and the quality of primary health care that would also expand the oral health care workforce.

REFORMING COMMERCIAL INSURANCE

- Introduced the Dentist and Optometric Care (DOC) Access Act which prohibits dental and vision plans from setting the fees network doctors may charge for services not covered by the insurers. To date, 43 states have adopted laws addressing the state marketplace.
- Issued Amicus Brief to end the overreach of ERISA Preemption and bring parity to the dental insurance market.
- Provided input for a hearing led by the House Committee on Education & Workforce focused on ERISA preemption and how to remedy lack of oversight and accountability to better serve patients.

STUDENT LOAN REFORM

- Introduced the REDI Act to help dental residents with accumulated interest.
- Lead a coalition of dental and medical organizations to push for bipartisan legislation that would ease the burden of dental school debt.
- Secured long-sought reforms to the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program and the Indian Health Service Loan Repayment program.

TRANSFORMING VETERANS ORAL HEALTH

- Secured a requirement for TRICARE Dental Program enrollment, eligibility and premium payment processing to be handled by a third-party administrator, and ensured beneficiaries have three dental insurance enrollment options from several carriers.
- Obtained a commitment from Congress to study premium-free TRICARE dental coverage for Reserve Component service members.
- Advocated for Congress to increase resources for VA Dentistry, protect funding dedicated to VA Dentistry, and to restore executive authority to VA Dentistry leadership.
- Advocated for and supported the enactment of the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act, which offers increased and improved access to VA Dental benefits for veterans and further increase access through support for VA dentists and the Veterans Community Care Program.

PUBLIC INSURANCE REFORM

- Advocated for adults to have mandatory access to dental care and supports the Medicaid Dental Benefit Act (S 570/H.R. 1342) and the Strengthening Medicaid Incentive for Licensees Enrolled in Dental (SMILED) Act (H.R. 1422).
- Urged the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee to establish a dental loss ratio requirement for independent dental plans being sold on the Affordable Care Act (ACA) Health Insurance Marketplace exchange.
- Ensured that dental treatment services associated with certain systemic health issues are being compensated for eligible disease management.

APPROPRIATIONS

- Protected and maintained funding for Title VII dental residency program, Action for Dental Health, Indian Health Service dental, National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR) through March 2025. Extended funding for Community Health Centers, National Health Service Corps, and Teaching Health Centers through March 2025.

State Advocacy

164 NEW DENTAL INSURANCE REFORM LAWS

Between 2018 and 2024, successfully advocated for 164 new dental commercial insurance reform laws across the United States that either created or enhanced existing dental insurance laws.

31 States with Network Leasing Laws

Laws in 31 states protect dentists' service contracts from being leased or sold to different insurance networks without knowledge or consent. Since 2019, 23 of these laws added opt-out/in rights for dentists allowing them to choose whether to be leased.

28 States with Virtual Credit Card Laws

New laws passed in 28 states to prevent insurers from requiring fee-based credit card payments as the sole reimbursement method for dentists. The first to pass was in 2018.

27 States with Assignment of Benefits Laws

In 27 states, laws require dental plans to send claim payments to dentists directly when enrolled patients instruct their plan to do so.

39 States Limit Retroactive Denials

39 states limit the time in which insurers are allowed to request claim payment refunds. The laws vary from 6 months to about two years.

15 States Ensure Prior Authorization Payments

Laws prohibit insurers from denying claims for procedures insurers have approved. All 15 laws have been enacted since the first one in 2018.

43 States Have Noncovered Services Laws

43 states prohibit insurers from dictating the cost of care they aren't covering.

11 States Have Medical Loss Ratio Laws

11 states have enacted Medical Loss Ratio laws that adopt transparency or require insurers to spend a minimum amount on dental care.

MEDICAID REFORM

The ADA develops resources that state dental societies have used to reform their Medicaid programs, making it easier for dentists to participate and deliver patient care.

State Updates

- Colorado: Increased budget to \$78 million dedicated to meaningful reimbursement rate increases for Medicaid dental providers.
- Georgia increased funding for the adult dental Medicaid program by \$11M.
- Florida added \$35M to the dental Medicaid program this year, the first increase since 2011.
- Nebraska improved Medicaid funding by 12.5% this year with an eye toward more improvements next year.
- West Virginia restructured the annual benefit limit in the adult program to a 24-month term allowing for greater flexibility on performing services that would otherwise exceed the benefit cap under the former 12-month term.
- Rhode Island adopted facility fee code G0330 which allows ambulatory surgical care centers (ASCs) to seek reimbursement for facility and administrative costs incurred by making their facilities available for dental services.

STUDENT LOAN REFORM

- Florida expanded its dental student loan repayment program with an \$8M funding boost this year.
- Wisconsin students participating in the new Marquette University Rural Dental Scholarship Program may receive an annual scholarship of up to \$30,000 for every academic year up to 4 years, in exchange for practicing in a designated Dental Health Provider Shortage Area (DHPSA) in a rural county after graduation.

STATE WORKFORCE UPDATES

The Dentist and Dental Hygienist Licensure Compact

Ten states have passed legislation designed to allow dentists to practice more easily in multiple states (CO, IA, KS, ME, MN, OH, TN, VA, WA, WI). The compact is officially active, and more member states are expected to join in 2025. The Compact Commission, made up of the member states, hopes to begin issuing privileges in late 2025.

Model Legislation Created

Successfully advocated for passage of the Dental Access Model Act at the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), providing a template for policymakers to help better utilize the existing dental workforce via EFDA's, Oral Preventive Assistants, and teledentistry.