

April 15, 2021

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Stabenow:

On behalf of the American Dental Association (ADA) and our 162,000 member dentists, we are writing to extend our thanks and support for introducing S. 560, the *Oral Health for Moms Act*, which expands dental coverage of women during their pregnancy and postpartum.

Good oral health is an important part of good overall health, which is especially important during pregnancy and postpartum as untreated dental disease can be harmful to mother and baby. For example, women are more likely to develop gingivitis during pregnancy, which can cause swelling and tenderness. Left untreated, gingivitis can affect the supporting tissues that hold teeth in place. If left untreated, it can progress to more severe types of gum disease, tooth loss and have potential implications on general health. Additionally, untreated decay in new moms can translate to their newborn infants acquiring that bacteria that puts them at higher risk for severe forms of tooth decay. Gum disease during pregnancy has also been linked to premature labor and low birth weight babies.

The ADA would suggest that the Dental Quality Alliance¹ be named specifically as an entity advising the Secretary of Health and Human Services regarding appropriate quality measures for receipt of dental services by pregnant women within Medicaid programs. Additional inclusion of language to help reduce administrative burdens for providers by streamlining the credentialing process would also be beneficial. To this end, the ADA also suggests identifying the Council for Affordable Quality Healthcare (CAQH)² ProView within

¹ The [DQA](#) was formed at the request of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). The mission of the DQA is to advance performance measurement as a means to improve oral health, patient care, and safety through a consensus-building process. It is a [multi-stakeholder entity](#) that has developed a set of [measures for the pediatric and adult populations](#). Several of these measures are used by state Medicaid programs and the sealant measure is used within the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (CHIPRA) Core Set. The DQA has conceptualized measures for the population of pregnant women and has also identified several data availability issues that would need to be resolved before measurement is instituted. The DQA is available to share its expertise on these matters.

² [CAQH](#) is a nonprofit alliance of health plans and trade associations that is the leader in creating shared initiatives to streamline the business of healthcare. CAQH ProView® is an online provider data-entry solution for credentialing. It streamlines the process of collecting provider data by using a standard electronic form that meets the needs of nearly every health plan, hospital and other healthcare organization. The CAQH ProView form is standardized across the healthcare disciplines – both medical and dental—and is adopted as the credentialing standard by several states. CAQH ProView has been in use for more than 17 years, and is widely used and trusted by the healthcare industry. It currently includes more than 1.6 million participating healthcare providers, who share their professional data with over 900 participating organizations. Participation in CAQH ProView improves the process of data collection for credentialing and reduces the number of times that a dentist has to

the legislation as the single source for credentialing data collection and requiring a time frame of no longer than 90 days to complete the credentialing process by state Medicaid programs.

Thank you again and we welcome the opportunity to continuing working with your office on reducing barriers for dentists to sign up for Medicaid. If you have any questions please contact Chris Tampio at tampioc@ada.org to facilitate further discussions.

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Klemmedson, D.D.S., M.D.
President

Kathleen T. O'Loughlin, D.M.D., M.P.H.
Executive Director

Cc: Michigan Dental Association

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complete and submit the same information to multiple entities, therefore helping to alleviate administration burden.