

GEORGIA'S ACTION FOR DENTAL HEALTH

The Georgia Dental Association Action for Dental Health is a concerted effort to maintain and enhance the oral health and the overall health of all Georgians.

Executive Summary

Optimal oral health is essential to overall health. This is why the Georgia Dental Association is proud to launch the Georgia Action for Dental Health. The goal is to advance comprehensive solutions to prevent dental disease before it starts and ensure that all Georgians can obtain treatment by a dentist. The GDA strongly believes that achieving this goal will require strengthening public-private partnerships and adequately funding public health programs that are designed to meet Georgians' unique needs. Georgia's Action for Dental Health will be put into operation over the next several years as the GDA works with interested stakeholders to attain these objectives.

OBJECTIVES

1. **Promote quality attainable dental care for the uninsured and underserved in Georgia.**
2. **Promote oral health education and literacy to mitigate potential barriers to a dental home.**
3. **Optimize the use and availability of publicly supported dental facilities.**

STRATEGIES

1. **Promote quality attainable dental care for the uninsured and underserved in Georgia.**
 - Connect patients needing care to a dentist and support a reimbursement process to cover the cost of care.
 - Pursue an adult preventative dental Medicaid program (including some limited restorative codes).
 - Increase the effectiveness of the existing Medicaid dental program in providing preventative care and treatment.
 - Seek a dental carve-out. A dental carve-out in the Medicaid budget would allocate dollars specifically for oral health care and separate those dollars from those for other health needs.
 - Seek a single administrator. A single administrator of the dental management piece would yield tremendous savings.
 - Savings realized from the elimination of multiple dental management organizations could be utilized to support an adult preventive Medicaid program, including specific restorative treatment.

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- Require Care Management Organizations/Dental Management Organizations to contribute a portion of their revenue toward funding oral health program such as an adult dental Medicaid program.
 - Support the presence of a dentist in a school-based clinic.
 - Potential new career path for dentists
 - Could be limited to schools with a large population of children on free and reduced cost lunch
 - Develop partnerships with free and reduced fee dental clinics and other entities that serve patients who need a “Dental Home.”
 - The Georgia Dental Association in collaboration with specific border-state dental schools would create residency opportunities in underserved communities within existing FQHCs or other public health facilities.
 - Develop and implement an oral health care caregiver education program for parents, caregivers, nursing home staff, and others providing care to individuals who are not fully independent.
 - Secure state funding for coordinators to match special needs and medically compromised patients with volunteer dentists through the Dental Lifeline Network (Donated Dental Services).
 - Increase Medicaid dental reimbursement rates and require 85/15 medical loss ratio (MLR) for dental care in managed care programs.
 - Proposed CMS rules, released on May 27, 2015, would require an 85/15 MLR for managed care Medicaid programs.
- 2. Promote oral health education and literacy to mitigate potential barriers to a dental home.**
- Establish curriculum standards and training materials for social workers to identify and address potential barriers to care (e.g. transportation).
 - Promote oral health education in public assistance programs.
 - Support and expand preventive oral health education and referrals in pediatricians’ offices.
 - Utilize GDA Foundation to help create new funding streams for safety net programs.
 - Establish and expand emergency room diversion programs.
- 3. Optimize use and availability of publicly funded dental facilities.**
- Establish and adequately fund a dental student loan repayment program.
 - \$200,000 appropriation for rural practitioner loan repayment was signed into the FY16 state budget.
 - Require oral health education in schools.
 - Expand funding for county health department dental programs.
 - Oppose efforts to decrease funding, or reduce requirements for, community fluoridation programs.
 - Expand public/private partnerships with federally qualified community health centers using private practice providers.
 - Establish a protocol for licensed Georgia dentists to rent underutilized public health dental care facilities.
 - Fill the vacant Dental Director position with a dentist at the Department of Public Health, which is responsible for public health dentistry initiatives and outreach.
 - Potentially raise some funding for this position through increasing biennial dental license renewal fee.