

GEORGIA'S ACTION FOR DENTAL HEALTH

An Initiative of the Georgia Dental Association

The Action for Dental Health, an initiative of the Georgia Dental Association (“GDA”), is a coordinated effort to enhance the oral health and overall health of all Georgians.

Executive Summary

Optimal oral health is essential to overall health and is why the GDA has created Georgia's Action for Dental Health. The goal is to identify comprehensive and sustainable solutions to prevent dental disease before it begins and ensure all Georgians can obtain treatment by a Georgia-licensed dentist. The GDA, in conjunction with the GDA's Foundation for Oral Health, strongly believes its members are achieving this goal by establishing public-private-partnerships and supporting additional funding for public health programs that meet the unique needs of underserved populations. Georgia's Action for Dental Health has been in operation for several years and will continue to evolve as the GDA works to attain these objectives.

OBJECTIVES

1. Promote quality dental care that is attainable for uninsured/low-income citizens located in rural and underserved areas of Georgia.
2. Promote oral health education and literacy to reduce barriers for patients seeking a dental home and promote one standard of care for all Georgians.
3. Optimize the use and availability of public and private dental facilities in conjunction with the GDA's Foundation for Oral Health.

STRATEGIES

1. Promote quality dental care that is attainable for uninsured/low-income citizens located in rural and underserved areas of Georgia.
 - Increase the effectiveness of the existing Medicaid dental program in both preventative and restorative care.
 - Secure annual dental Medicaid fee increases while reducing the administrative burden associated with the program.
 - Seek a dental carve-out in the Medicaid budget, which would allocate dollars specifically to oral health care and separate those dollars from the funds for other health care needs.
 - Seek a single administrator for the dental Medicaid program, which would reduce the administrative burdens for Medicaid patients and providers, while at the time yielding savings for dental practices.
 - Require dental management organizations to meet the same Medical Loss Ratio standards as the care management organizations of 85:15, which is authorized in the [Medicaid and CHIP Managed Care Final Rule](#) approved on May 6, 2016.

- Address the transportation issue for the low-income and elderly population.
 - Utilize the GDA Foundation for Oral Health to apply for grants to support initiatives for transportation to and from dental appointments.
 - Identify existing and potential funding sources for transportation to dental appointments in the state's budget.
 - Protect state funding for the full-time coordinator position for GDA's Donated Dental Services program, which provides dental care for patients who are elderly or medically compromised.
 - Establish funding for a dental student loan repayment program.
 - Protect the fifteen spots in the current Rural Dental Student Loan Repayment Program, which provides eligible dentists with student loan repayment assistance from the state of \$25,000/year for up to four years
 - Allow eligible dentists to receive funding for malpractice insurance assistance through the [Medical Malpractice Insurance Premium grant](#) overseen by the Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce.
- 2. Promote oral health education and literacy to reduce barriers for patients seeking a dental home and promote one standard of care for all Georgians.**
- Educate GDA member dentists on funding sources available to treat underserved populations.
 - Distribute information about the supplemental funds to the NOW/COMP waivers that can be used to provide dental care to individuals with developmental disabilities.
 - Support and expand preventative oral health education in OBGYN and pediatrician offices.
 - Identify ways to educate women and perinatal providers on the need for dental care during pregnancy.
 - Promote oral health education in public assistance programs and in schools.
 - Develop education and resources on opioid prescribing to combat the opioid abuse epidemic.
 - Create the *Prescribe with Care* initiative focused on education, collaboration, and administrative rule-making so that GDA member dentists are part of the solution to address the opioid abuse problem in Georgia.
 - Develop a continuing education course for dentists on the prescribing of opioids and the laws associated with the Georgia Prescription Drug Monitoring Program.
 - Advocate for the creation of a one-hour opioid continuing education requirement for dentists as a component of licensure renewal in Georgia.
- 3. Optimize the use and availability of public and private dental facilities in conjunction with the GDA's Foundation for Oral Health.**
- Oppose efforts to decrease funding or reduce requirements for community water fluoridation programs.
 - Serve on the Department of Public Health's Fluoride Advisory Committee.
 - Advocate against changes to state fluoride requirements in public water systems that are not supported by science.
 - Develop public-private-partnerships with free/reduced-fee dental clinics and other entities serving low-income and underserved patients.
 - Support and promote the importance of volunteering at charitable dental clinics located throughout Georgia.
 - Partner with the Dental College of Georgia and the Department of Public Health to create an Adjunct Professor Program that allows dental students to complete their clinical rotations at public health clinics throughout the state under the supervision of a GDA member dentist who serves as adjunct faculty for the dental college.
 - Establish a tax credit for adjunct faculty of the dental school.