

Oral Health Illustrations

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Blueprint of Oral Health Care

Last updated: July 6th, 2023

Blueprint of Oral Health Care

The current oral health care infrastructure creates barriers to care for people with Medicaid and their providers. New structures create improvement in the system.

This visual was derived from interviews with various interested parties to identify barriers to oral health care.

GOVERNMENT

Lobby for Legislation

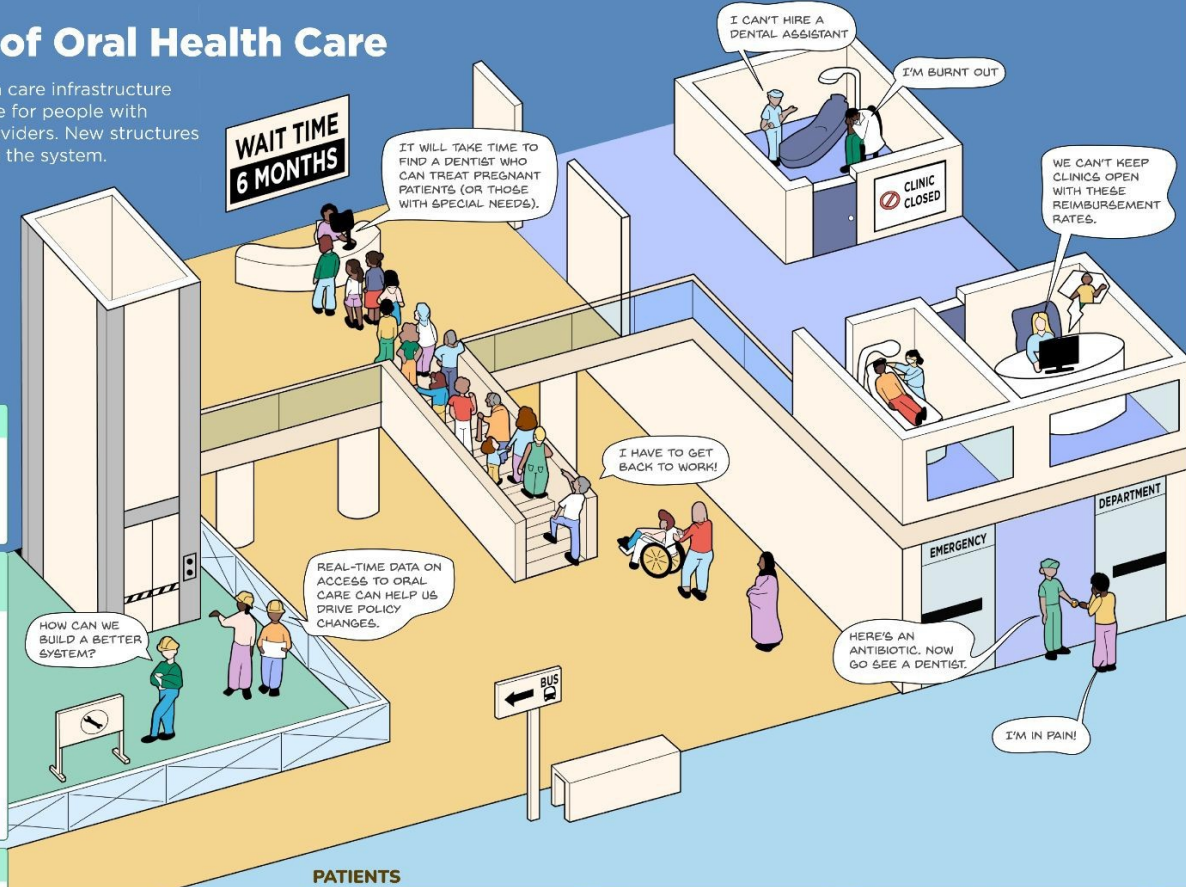
States may allocate more funding to expand oral health care benefits.

Better Funding, Better Coverage

Better reimbursement models, more virtual appointments, and increased professional opportunities for mid-level providers are possible avenues for increasing access to oral health care.

Fund Clinics

Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) play a vital role in oral health care and use federal funds to sustain services.



INTEROPERABILITY

Improve patient records through policy and standards that allow data to be shareable between systems.

PATIENTS

Delays in Care

There are more patients than available providers, leading to appointment wait times of at least 6 months.

No-Shows

Lack of transportation and proximity to providers limit access to oral health care.

Rural Area Challenges

Rural areas are home to both high-need Medicaid patient populations and providers with financial challenges.

Cultural Barriers

Patients rely on community based health workers to bridge cultural and language gaps during appointments.

PROVIDERS

Capped Coverage

Limited coverage can make oral health care more expensive, causing people with Medicaid more out-of-pocket costs.

Teledentistry

The COVID-19 Pandemic has led to increased dental care via televisits. However, some people with Medicaid have limited Internet access.

Provider Opt-out

Burdensome enrollment, low reimbursement audits, and claim denials lead providers to opt out.

Wrong Place

People go to the Emergency Department with oral health issues instead of the dentist.

Whole Person Health

Providers educate patients on good oral health habits which affect overall health.

Principles of Oral Health Care

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Better Funding, Better Coverage

Adults with Medicaid need better oral health coverage. Limiting services lead to patients paying out-of-pocket costs or avoiding oral health care until there is an emergency. State policy changes can designate funding for expanding oral health covered services



Raise Reimbursement Rates

Oral health care providers want reimbursement rates increased due to inflation, supply shortages and labor costs. State policy changes can raise reimbursement rates for Medicaid providers.

REPRESENTATION IN LEGISLATION



Representation in Legislation

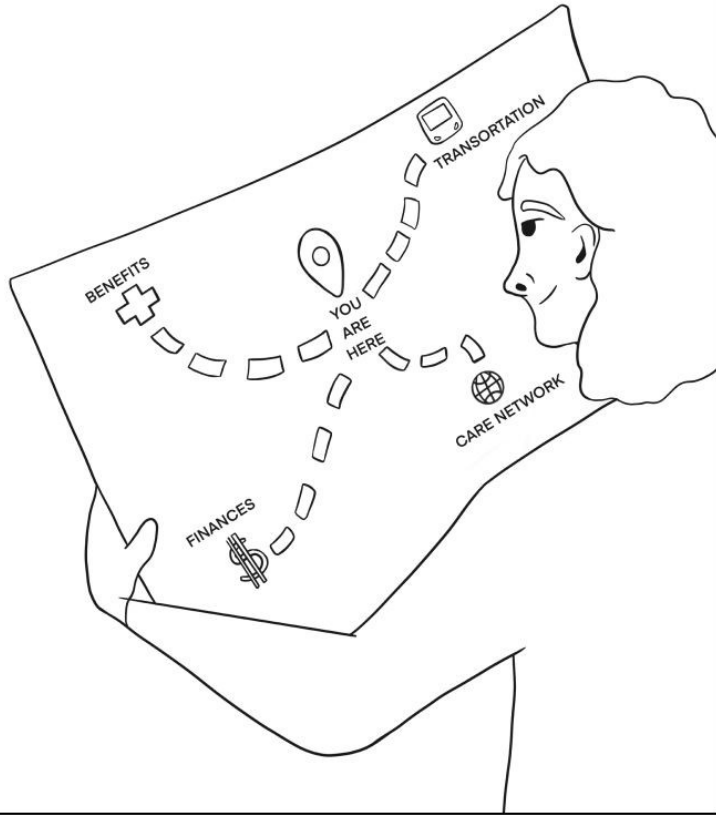
Oral health care providers have firsthand knowledge of how state legislation affects patients and providers. These experienced individuals must be consulted as states write policies and manage Medicaid oral health care programs. Advocates and community health works should also be involved.



Support Providers

Complicated enrollment, low reimbursement, burdensome audits, and limited access to specialized care can lead providers to opt out of the oral health care Medicaid program. Varying oral health care payment models used by state Medicaid programs complicate matters further.

NAVIGATE BENEFITS



Navigate Benefits

People with Medicaid lack awareness of oral health care benefits and have difficulty navigating system complexities. Frequent state policy changes and fear of unexpected charges lead to poor benefit utilization. When there is a difference between what patients expect to be covered and what is realistically covered, this can create frustration and blame towards the provider.

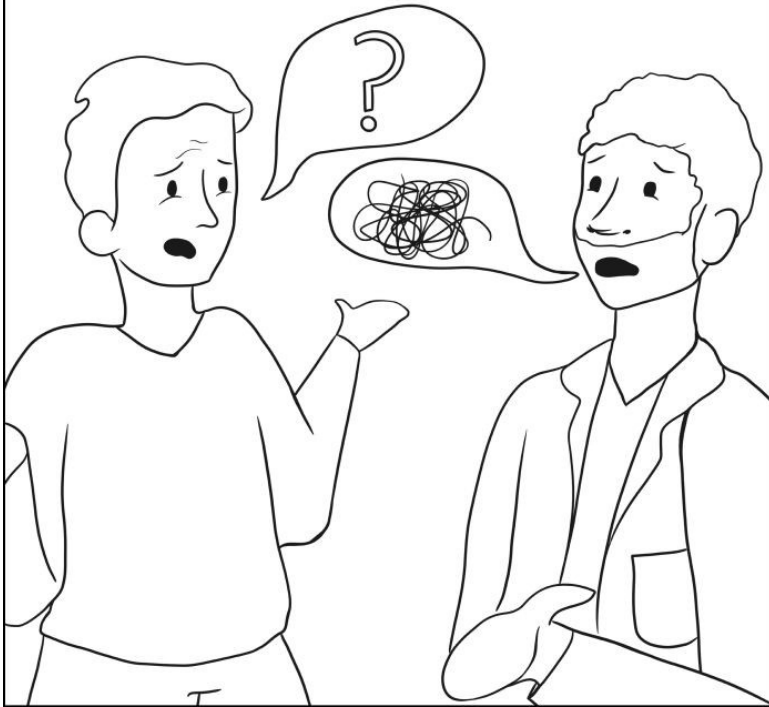


RURAL REVIVAL

Rural Revival

Oral health care providers lack incentives to serve in rural areas, which often is home for many people with Medicaid and people with higher oral health care needs. Increased avenues for oral health care may include more dental clinics, mobile dentistry programs and community health centers. Creating incentives for providers such as school loan repayment programs could offer an incentive and retention for providers leading to better access to oral health care.

TRANSLATE MY TROUBLES



Translate My Troubles

Patients rely on community health workers to bridge cultural and language gaps with their oral health care providers. Interpreter services for certain languages and dialects can be hard to find, and unofficial interpreters such as bilingual staff and patient family members may misunderstand key information during oral health care visits due to lack of oral health education.

Know Your Health

Oral health literacy is key to improving patient health outcomes. Providers emphasize the importance of preventive care, particularly in childhood, as there are limited Medicaid preventive benefits for adults. However, It is difficult for some people with Medicaid to change their oral health habits and dental providers experience time constraints when educating patients during visits.



**ORAL
HEALTH CARE
FOR ALL**

Oral Health Care Equity for All

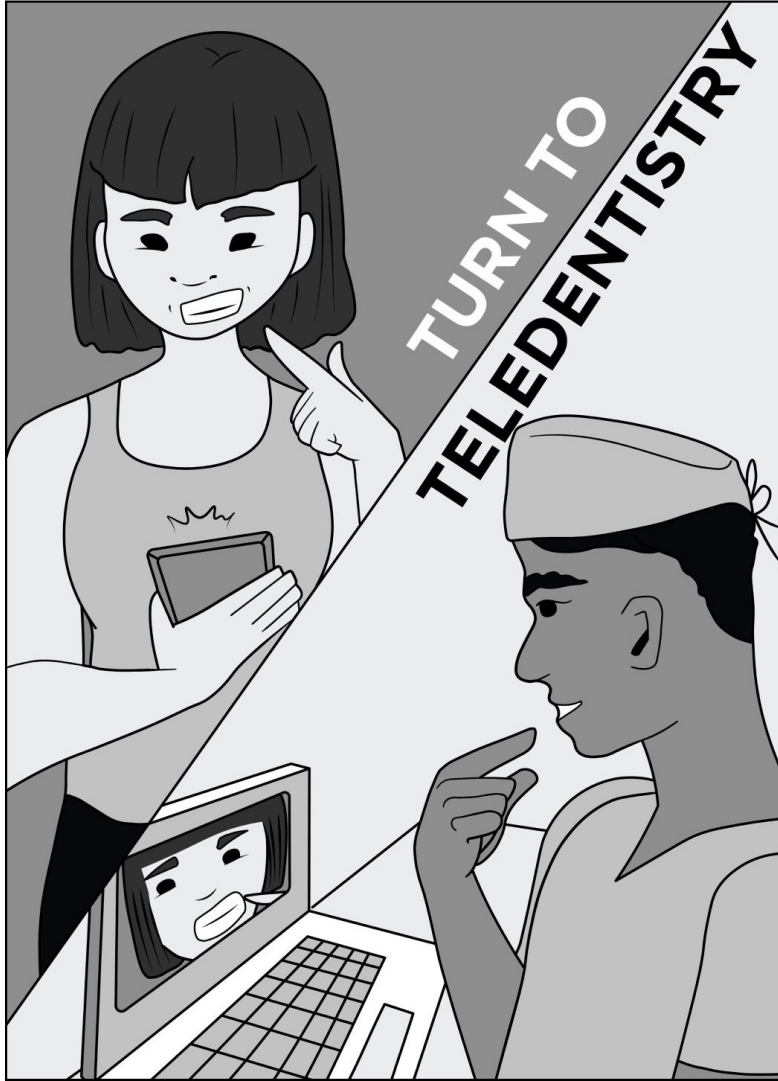
People with Medicaid face many barriers to care, including transportation issues to far-away clinics. They also have higher rates of missing appointments as they are unable to take time off work and/or lacking childcare options. Dental problems also cause an increase in missed work due to extreme pain, which means loss of money. Providers emphasize the need for specialized training for pregnant women, infants, and patients with special needs.

FIND ME A PROVIDER



Find Me a Provider

There are more people on Medicaid oral health care programs than available providers, leading to long appointment wait times to get a dental appointment. Oral health care services performed in the operating room also require long wait times, which is challenging for children and individuals with special needs who require sedation for oral health care. Delayed oral health care worsens dental conditions and may negatively impact overall health.



Turn to Teledentistry

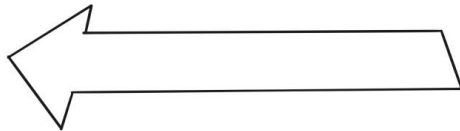
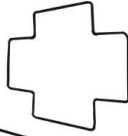
Teledentistry can serve as a bridge for patients who cannot get to in-person appointments. Expanding teledentistry services may include an initial diagnoses, referral to specialists and prescribing treatments.

REDIRECT CARE

DENTAL



EMERGENCY



Redirect Care

Delayed care worsens conditions, sometimes becoming life-threatening. However, the ED cannot fully address dental problems.