

**Department of Human Services
Health Services Committee
Senator Judy Lee, Chairman
July 30, 2014**

Chairman Lee, members of the Health Services Committee, I am Julie Schwab, Director of Medical Services for the Department of Human Services (Department). I appear before you to provide information on North Dakota Medicaid dental service providers by geographical area of the state and areas of the state lacking Medicaid service providers and the effect of the state's medical assistance payment rates on dentists accepting Medicaid recipients, billing and reimbursement for service provided by dental therapists and expanded function dental assistants and dental hygienists, the effect of the Medicaid Expansion on the dental coverage of certain Medicaid participants, and options to improve access to dental services in the state—especially in rural areas, and whether the use of incentives for dental providers to locate in underserved areas in the state may improve access.

Medicaid Dental Service Providers

Attached to my testimony are two maps to exhibit Medicaid dental access across North Dakota.

[Attachment 1](#) shows children age 0 through 20. The map illustrates, by county, the total number of children enrolled in Medicaid as of November 2013; it contains the number of Medicaid dental providers serving 100 or more children, 50 to 99 children, and less than 50 children during calendar year 2013.

[Attachment 2](#) shows adults over the age of 20. The map illustrates, by county, the total number of adults enrolled in Medicaid as of November 2013; it contains the number of Medicaid dental providers serving 100 or more adults, 50 to 99 adults, and less than 50 adults during calendar year 2013.

Medicaid Dental Rates Effect on Dentists

[Attachment 3](#) demonstrates North Dakota Medicaid dental rates with neighboring state Medicaid dental rates effective July 1, 2014.

As a result of legislative appropriations, the Department has increased the Medicaid dental fee schedule as follows:

History of Dental Fee Schedule

FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING	INFLATIONARY INCREASES	Additional Increases
July 1, 2007	4%	2007 House Bill 1246 provided \$444,198, of which \$160,000 was general fund to increase the fee schedule for children's dental services.
July 1, 2008	5%	
July 1, 2009	0%	Fee Schedule increased to a minimum of an average of 75% of billed charges.
July 1, 2010	6%	
July 1, 2011	3%	
July 1, 2012	3%	
July 1, 2013	4%	
July 1, 2014	4%	

The Department’s Decision Support vendor, Truven Health Analytics, prepared a variance analysis report for dental services, which shows the cause for changes in total costs for dental services from one period to another. Truven Health Analytics compared cost and utilization for

services incurred in State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2007 to services incurred in SFY 2013. The report broke the services into two categories: Services for Children (age 0 to 21) and Services for Adults (age 21 and over).

The usage rate (average services per eligible) for children has increased 24.6 percent in the SFY 2013 period when compared to the SFY 2007 period. The usage rate for adults increased 1.4 percent in the in the SFY 2013 period when compared to the SFY 2007 period. The overall usage rate increased 13.9 percent.

Medicaid Reimbursement for Dental Therapists, Expanded Function Dental Assistants and Dental Hygienists

At the present time, North Dakota Medicaid does not enroll or directly reimburse dental therapists, expanded function dental assistants or dental hygienists. North Dakota Medicaid does reimburse dental hygienists and dental assistants that are under the supervision of a dentist for the application of fluoride varnish.

Dental Coverage for the Medicaid Expansion Enrollees

At the present time, the North Dakota Medicaid Expansion plan covers dental services for recipients 19 and 20 years old.

The Department is aware that certain individuals who have had dental coverage under Traditional Medicaid will not have coverage with the Medicaid Expansion. An example is a recipient who has access to Medicaid under Refugee Medicaid category (there is a maximum timeframe for this eligibility category of eight months) and after the eight months applies and is determined eligible for the Medicaid

Expansion. Medicaid Expansion enrollees 21 years of age and older do not have dental coverage.

When implementing the Medicaid Expansion, the Department selected the benchmark option, and consistent with the benchmark selected for the Federal Marketplace, selected the Sanford Health Plan. The Sanford Health Plan does not include dental coverage and therefore the Medicaid Expansion did not include dental coverage. Due to the Medicaid requirements under the Early Periodic Screening Diagnosis and Treatment Program (EPSDT), dental services are covered for Medicaid Expansion enrollees that are 19 and 20 years old.

Options to Improve Access to Dental Services

The Department attends the North Dakota Oral Health Coalition, Ronald McDonald Care Mobile Advisory Committee and Oral Health Stakeholder workgroups. These committees encourage collaboration and access to dental services. The Department continually updates the dental policy manual and reviews new codes for potential inclusion as a Medicaid covered service.

To incentivize providers, in 2012, the Department developed the Non-Profit Clinic Dental Access Project. The focus of the project is to increase access to dental services for Medicaid and CHIP recipients by providing funds to support the recruitment of additional dentists to serve in non-profit dental clinics.

By proposing Medicaid and CHIP access and outreach plans, a non-profit entity can qualify for funding to assist a dentist with school loan repayment. A non-profit dental clinic would be eligible for funding for

a part-time dentist (each dentist would receive up to \$10,000 per year, for a maximum of \$30,000 for three years) or a full time dentist (a maximum of \$60,000). The funding is sent directly to the financial institution of the dentist after the Department's approval of the non-profit dental clinic meeting the threshold requirements.

Bridging the Dental Gap was awarded the funding and their new dentist started on July 1, 2013. This has increased their outreach efforts to the Medicaid and CHIP population and expanded their service area from a 50-mile radius to a 75 mile radius from the city of Bismarck.

Department staff also maintain a federal website of dental providers who accept new Medicaid and CHIP recipients. The purpose of the website is to provide a comprehensive list of providers who currently accept Medicaid and CHIP recipients. The website is www.insurekidsnow.gov.

The Department inserts a flyer in all Medicaid and CHIP application packets that describes the dental benefit for each program including information on when it is recommended that a recipient receive a dental checkup.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.