



Advancing Prevention and Reducing Childhood Caries in Medicaid and CHIP Affinity Group

FACT SHEET

The Center for Medicaid and CHIP Services (CMCS) is pleased to launch the **Advancing Prevention and Reducing Childhood Caries in Medicaid and CHIP Affinity Group** to help states implement quality improvement (QI) activities to improve oral health outcomes through the delivery of preventive oral health services.

Overview

Tooth decay, also known as dental caries, is a common and preventable chronic disease among U.S. children. Children and adolescents from low-income families, including those covered by Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), are about twice as likely to have untreated tooth decay as their higher-income peers.¹ State Medicaid programs are required to cover Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) services, including comprehensive oral health care, for all beneficiaries under age 21. These programs play an important role in paying for, providing, and managing oral health services, including developing approaches to integrating oral health care with other health services.

The Opportunity

The **Advancing Prevention and Reducing Childhood Caries in Medicaid and CHIP Affinity Group** will provide technical assistance (TA) to state Medicaid and CHIP agencies and their partners as they design, test, implement, and assess strategies to improve pediatric oral health. QI advisors and subject-matter experts will provide state teams with individualized guidance on using QI tools to (1) improve the delivery of fluoride varnish by primary or community care providers; and (2) connect beneficiaries with ongoing sources of dental care. States will also have the opportunity to learn from one another through regular individual state calls and all-state workshops. Participating states will receive TA over 24 months (January 2021–December 2022).

This affinity group is part of the Advancing Prevention and Reducing Childhood Caries in Medicaid and CHIP Learning Collaborative. The collaborative offers webinars on silver diamine fluoride; the delivery of fluoride varnish outside dental offices; the role of Medicaid and CHIP in preventive oral health care; the use of oral health quality measures for QI initiatives; and state case studies on how to identify and design effective change activities to improve oral health care access, utilization, and outcomes. Webinar details and recordings are available on [Medicaid.gov](https://www.Medicaid.gov). (Listening to the webinars is not a prerequisite for joining the affinity group.)

State Team Learning Objectives

As part of the affinity group, state teams will:

- Meet virtually on a monthly basis, alternating all-state workshops with individual state coaching calls, and learn from QI advisors and oral health experts
- Advance their QI skills by participating in the [Medicaid and CHIP Quality Improvement Open School](#)

¹ Dye, B.A., G.L. Mitnik, T.J. Iafolla, and C.M. Vargas. "Trends in Dental Caries in Children and Adolescents According to Poverty Status in the United States from 1999 Through 2004 and from 2011 Through 2014." *Journal of the American Dental Association*, vol. 148, no. 8, August 2017, pp. 550–565.



- Create a driver diagram and a project implementation plan
- Test, implement, and assess a data-driven QI project

Application and Selection

To participate in the affinity group, please fill out and submit an expression-of-interest form (EOI) by **November 18, 2020, 8:00 p.m. (ET)**. Each state team must include the Medicaid dental program director (or similar staff member) and QI staff. The team may also include staff from the state Medicaid program, Medicaid managed care or dental health plans, providers, the department of health, or public health entities.

Upon receipt of the EOI, the TA team will contact the state team lead to schedule a call to discuss the state's project goals. The selection criteria for the affinity group will include demonstration of:

- Well-articulated goals for participating in the affinity group
- An understanding of the challenges and opportunities related to use of fluoride varnish in nondental settings for the target population
- Identification of a well-rounded state team for participation

Please send any questions to MACQualityImprovement@mathematica-mpr.com.