IOWA’S MEDICAID SYSTEM – DENTAL COVERAGE AND PROGRAMS THAT ASSIST IOWANS’ ACCESS TO DENTAL CARE

MEDICAID PAYMENT SYSTEMS
Medicaid dental coverage in Iowa
- Comprehensive services for children ages 0-18 (required)
- Extensive services for adults + Medicaid expansion – All are now part of what is called the Dental Wellness Plan

Medicaid fee-for-service
Children’s dental services are paid by Iowa Medicaid as a fee-for-service plan
Medicaid also reimburses Iowa’s Maternal and Child Health contractors for preventive dental services provided to children (fee-for-service)

Dental Wellness Plan
DWP began as part of Medicaid expansion
- Services offered stayed consistent with fee-for-service Medicaid, but an expanded population become eligible
- Re-imbursement rates to dentists were higher than fee-for-service Medicaid which helped to encourage over 800 dental providers and 100 specialists to sign up.

The original DWP design was a tiered system of earned benefits
- The plan allowed members to obtain dental services right away including preventive and emergency services.
- Additional services were earned by seeing a dentist every 6-12 months.
- In order to maintain current level of benefits member would continue seeing dentist every 6-12 months.
- This system encouraged members to establish and maintain a dental home.

Iowa Medicaid has contracts with Delta Dental of Iowa and MCNA

Beginning July 1, all adults are covered by Dental Wellness Plan (through Delta and MCNA)
It is no longer a tiered, earned benefit system
Reimbursement is only slightly better than Medicaid fee-for-service had been but much less than DWP plan when it originated. Due to this some dentists are starting to no longer accept these patients. Members who had been diligent in receiving dental care under the previous DWP plan may no longer have a dental home due to the changes.

IOWA PROGRAMS TO ASSIST/FACILITATE ACCESS TO DENTAL CARE
I-Smile: a specific state appropriation that also draws down federal matching funds
I-Smile is designed to help families on Medicaid (and other underserved) to access services, prevent disease, and improve overall health
23 dental hygienists are local I-Smile coordinators

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I-Smile services include:

- Building referral relationships with dental offices
- Providing care coordination assistance to facilitate children’s access to dental appointments (and other health and social service needs)
- Developing partnerships with local organizations, businesses, and schools to increase awareness of the importance of oral health and to engage seekers’ program buy-in
- Promoting oral health within communities through participation in community events, news articles and ads, and other outreach
- Training medical and dental providers about how to do an oral screening and fluoride application on very young children
- Providing gap-filling services for children within public health settings to prevent dental disease and reduce costs to the health system

I-Smile results in 2016

- More than three times as many children received gap-filling preventive care from a dental hygienist or nurse in a public health setting than in 2005, the year prior to the start of the I-Smile™ program (33,403 in 2016; 7,863 in 2005).
- 77 percent more Medicaid-enrolled children 0-12 years old saw a dentist than in 2005.
- 4,572 more children received care from dentists than did a year ago, a 3.8 percent increase.

I-Smile Silver: a pilot project in 10 Iowa counties funded through a grant from Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation and the Health Resources and Services Administration

Designed to help older Iowans (60 and over) access services, prevent disease, and improve overall health

3 dental hygienists are local I-Smile Silver coordinators (Scott, Lee, and Webster County Health Departments)

I-Smile Silver services include:

- Building referral relationships with dental offices
- Providing care coordination assistance to facilitate older Iowans’ access to dental appointments (and other health and social service needs)
- Developing partnerships with local organizations, businesses, nursing facilities, and Area Agencies on Aging to increase awareness of the importance of oral health and to engage seekers’ program buy-in
- Training direct care workforce about the importance of oral health and how to assist older Iowans’ with oral hygiene care
- Promoting oral health within communities through participation in community events, news articles and ads, and other outreach
- Providing gap-filling services for nursing facility residents to prevent dental disease and reduce costs to the health system

By 2030 almost 30% of the population in Iowa will be 65 and over. Medicare does not cover dental care. Very few seniors qualify for Medicaid and many that do have limited services or are in a nursing facility. This leaves the majority of Iowa seniors without any dental insurance. Many of the FQHC’s in Iowa only see children and pregnant woman which also limits how this population accesses care.