



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
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Michigan selected as one of 11 states for National Medicaid Oral Health Workforce Implementation Learning Series

Opportunity to learn, share best practices to bolster dental workforce

LANSING, Mich. – Michigan is one of 11 states competitively selected for the *Medicaid Oral Health Workforce Implementation Learning Series*, a national initiative led by the Center for Health Care Strategies (CHCS) with support from the CareQuest Institute for Oral Health.

This learning series will bring together Medicaid agencies and their partners to share practical, scalable oral health workforce solutions that can increase access and utilization of services to improve member health.

“Increasing Michigan’s dental workforce is an important focus for the department,” said Elizabeth Hertel, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services director. “We want to ensure Michigan families can easily access care as oral health plays a critical role in overall health and well-being.”

Michigan was chosen to participate in the learning series along with 10 additional states: Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Nevada, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, Virginia and Wisconsin.

Michigan has made great strides in improving access to oral health preventive measures such as community water fluoridation, fluoride varnish for ages 0 to 5 and school-based/school-linked dental sealant programs. Access to care for children has increased through the expansion of the [Healthy Kids Dental program](#) statewide and the recently passed kindergarten dental screening program, which will help prevent cavities among children and promote oral health education to their families.

However, ensuring access to these and other oral health programs requires a robust dental workforce. While Michigan has 59.1 dentists per 100,000 people, they are not equally distributed throughout the state or representative of the populations they serve. Strengthening the state’s oral health workforce is a goal of the [2025 Michigan State Oral Health Plan](#) developed by MDHHS and the Michigan Oral Health Coalition.

“These 11 state teams have demonstrated their commitment and readiness to implement strategies that strengthen and expand the oral health workforce,” said

Madeline Steward, MPH, senior program officer at CHCS. “We are honored to play a role in supporting their efforts.”

The *Medicaid Oral Health Workforce Implementation Learning Series* supports Medicaid agencies and their partners in understanding best practices and sharing lessons related to oral health workforce policies and programs. Through expert guidance and peer collaboration, participating states will deepen their knowledge of effective oral health workforce strategies, with the goal of strengthening workforce capacity and improving care for Medicaid populations.

Focus areas include:

- Expanding the oral health workforce by empowering providers to work at the top of their license.
- Increasing provider engagement by raising awareness of Medicaid opportunities.
- Improving program design to enhance coverage, benefits, and operations for providers and the communities served.
- Encouraging cross-sector collaboration and coordination of oral health priorities across a broad coalition of stakeholders to tackle related workforce issues.
- Building a pipeline of engaged providers through creative solutions.

More information about the *Medicaid Oral Health Workforce Implementation Learning Series* [is available online](#).

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