



Promoting Oral Health During Pregnancy

UPDATE ON ACTIVITIES

February 2023

This issue is part of a series of updates that highlight recent policies, programs, and resources to help ensure that health professionals and pregnant women and their families are aware of the importance and safety of receiving oral health care during pregnancy. The goal of these efforts is to increase pregnant women's access to and use of oral health care and ultimately improve the oral health and overall health of pregnant women and their children. Past issues of *Promoting Oral Health During Pregnancy: Update on Activities* are available [online](#).



Policies and Programs

It has been established that preventive, diagnostic, and restorative oral health care is safe throughout pregnancy and effective in improving and maintaining oral health. However, in 2020, only 40 percent of women reported having their teeth cleaned during pregnancy. Since good oral health is essential to good overall health, there has been a focus at federal and state levels on ensuring that overall health care, including oral health care, is available to women during pregnancy and the postpartum period.

American Rescue Plan

The American Rescue Plan Act, passed in 2021, includes Sections 9812 and 9822 modifications that allow states the option to extend Medicaid coverage for pregnant women to 12 months postpartum through a state plan amendment (SPA). States seeking to expand coverage for women during the postpartum period through a waiver may select the SPA option.

In September 2022, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) approved the extension of Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) coverage to 12 months postpartum in 24 states

and Washington, DC.¹ As of October 2022, all 50 states and Washington, DC, offer oral health coverage for pregnant and postpartum women through at least 60 days after pregnancy who are enrolled in Medicaid.¹ Currently, 39 states and Washington, DC, provide oral health coverage beyond emergency care benefits.²

Cross-Cutting Initiative: CMS Maternity Care Action Plan

In June 2022, the White House released *White House Blueprint for Addressing the Maternal Health Crisis*, which describes the administration's approach to improving maternal health and addressing inequities in maternal health outcomes. The blueprint identifies opportunities to enhance maternity care delivered to individuals enrolled in Medicare, Medicaid, CHIP, and the Health Insurance Marketplace® through a focus on driving improvements in access to and quality of care during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period.

In response, CMS identified five key gaps in maternity care related to its programs: coverage and access to care, data, quality of care, workforce, and social supports. CMS's coordinated [action plan](#) to improve maternity care access and quality is designed to improve

health outcomes and reduce disparities. The initiative will include technical assistance (TA) for states to extend coverage during the postpartum period, policies to support a diverse health professional workforce, and other equity-focused initiatives.

Integrating Oral Health Care and Primary Care Learning Collaborative: A State and Local Partnership

The Consortium for Oral Health Systems Integration and Improvement (COHSII), funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, is implementing the *Integrating Oral Health Care and Primary Care Learning Collaborative: A State and Local Partnership* project. The learning collaborative (LC) began in January 2022 and will continue through March 2024.

The LC's state component focuses on assessing and improving systems-level capacity for integrating oral health care and primary care for pregnant women. The local component focuses on integrating oral health care and primary care for pregnant women in a selected prenatal clinic in a community health center. COHSII staff and consultants provide TA to project teams to integrate the *interprofessional oral health core clinical competencies* into primary care practice.

Participating State Departments of Health and Prenatal Clinics

- California Department of Public Health, Office of Oral Health; La Clinica de La Raza
- Georgia Department of Public Health, Oral Health Program; Albany Area Primary Health Care
- Illinois Department of Public Health, Division of Oral Health; PCC Community Wellness Center
- Maryland Department of Health, Office of Oral Health; Choptank Community Health System
- Mississippi State Department of Health, Office of Oral Health; G.A. Carmichael Family Health Center
- Ohio Department of Health, Bureau of Maternal, Child and Family Health; Lorain County Health and Dentistry
- Rhode Island Department of Health, Oral Health Program; Comprehensive Community Action Program



- Texas Department of State Health Services, Oral Health Improvement Program; Stephen F. Austin Community Health Center
- West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Public Health, Oral Health Program; New River Health Association

References

1. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 2022. *HHS Approves 12-month Extension of Postpartum Medicaid and CHIP Coverage in North Carolina* [web page].
2. National Academy for State Health Policy. 2022. *State Medicaid Coverage of Dental Services for General Adult and Pregnant Populations* [web page].

Resources

Landmark Resources



Oral Health Care During Pregnancy: A National Consensus Statement

This **consensus statement** provides guidance on oral health care for pregnant women for prenatal care health professionals and oral health professionals, pharmacological considerations for pregnant women, and guidance for health professionals to share with pregnant women. The consensus statement was produced by the National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center. [Funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau]

Oral Health Care During Pregnancy and Through the Lifespan

This **paper** presents information for obstetricians, gynecologists, and others about common oral health conditions during pregnancy, periodontal disease and pregnancy outcomes, oral health assessment and counseling during pregnancy, and access to oral health care. The paper was produced by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, Committee on Health Care for Underserved Women, and reaffirmed in 2022.

National

Considerations for Identifying Pregnancies in Claims Data for Oral Health Care During Pregnancy (2022)

This **brief** provides information about two oral health quality measures for pregnant women that the Dental Quality Alliance (DQA) has developed. The brief explains why oral health care during pregnancy and the development of related oral health care quality measures are important, as well as how health care quality measures are reported. It also discusses identifying pregnant women in claims data for denominator

inclusion, determining enrollment requirements for denominator inclusion, determining time frame for receipt of recommended services for numerator inclusion, and the impact of benefits coverage on identification services for numerator inclusion. The brief was produced by DQA and the National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center. [Funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau]

DQA Measure Specifications: Administrative Claims-Based Measures—Oral Evaluation During Pregnancy (2022)

This **brief** provides information about DQA's quality measure focusing on oral evaluation during pregnancy. It includes a rationale for the measure and a description of the numerator, the denominator, and rates. The brief also includes instructions for how to calculate the measures. The brief was produced by DQA.





DQA Measure Specifications: Administrative Claims-Based Measures—Utilization of Dental Services During Pregnancy (2022)

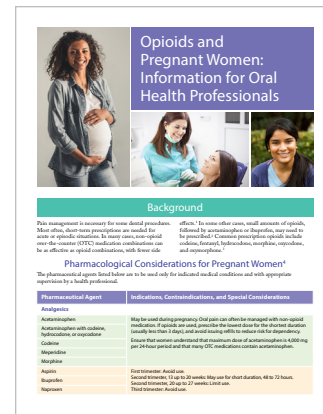
This **brief** provides information about DQA’s quality measure focusing on utilization of dental services during pregnancy. It includes a rationale for the measure and a description of the numerator, the denominator, and rates. The brief also includes instructions for how to calculate the measure. The brief was produced by DQA.

Guide to Oral Health Data Sources (2022)

This **guide** provides information on oral health data and sources that advocates may find helpful in describing access to care barriers, problems, and disparities and that could help make the case for policy solutions that address these issues. Topics include oral health access and outcomes, oral health professionals, Medicaid, and special populations (children, pregnant women, older adults, and adults with low incomes). The guide was produced by Community Catalyst.

Opioids and Pregnant Women: Information for Oral Health Professionals (2022)

This **practice guidance** provides an overview of pain management for dental procedures for women of reproductive age. It discusses pharmacological considerations for pregnant women (pharmaceutical agents and indications, contraindications, and special considerations), neonatal opioid withdrawal syndrome, guidelines for prescribing opioids, managing acute dental pain, and guidelines for discharging women with opioid prescriptions. Information about prescription drug monitoring programs is included. The practice guidance was produced by the National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center. [Funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau]



Oral Health Risk Assessment Questions to Ask Pregnant Women (2022)

This **compilation** presents findings from a review of 15 sources that include oral health risk assessment questions to ask pregnant women. The questions are organized by the following seven themes: dental concerns/pain, diet/nutrition, pregnancy symptoms, health behaviors, fluoride, last dental visit/dental home, and concerns about getting oral health care. The compilation was produced by the National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center. [Funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau]

The Partnership for Integrating Oral Health Care into Primary Care Project 2019–2021: Final Report (2021)

This **report** discusses the importance of integrating oral health care into primary care and provides information about the implementation of the Partnership for Integrating Oral Health Care into Primary Care project. It discusses project measures, detailed project findings, and strategies to integrate oral health care into primary care. The report also highlights technical assistance provided to and feedback received from project teams. The report was produced by the National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center. [Funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau]



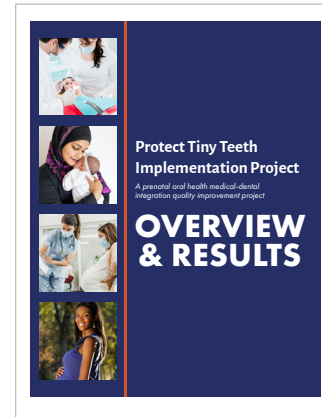
Preconception Care (Position Paper) (2022)

This **position paper** discusses family physicians' role in preconception care and offers evidence-based recommendations for addressing reproductive care. Topics include benefits of care, barriers to the delivery of care, health disparities and achieving health equity in reproductive outcomes, importance of oral health for a healthy pregnancy, and considerations for gender-diverse people. The position paper was produced by the American Academy of Family Physicians.

Protect Tiny Teeth Implementation Project: A Prenatal Oral Health Medical-Dental Integration Quality Improvement Project—Overview and Results (2022)

This **report** provides an overview of the Protect Tiny Teeth Implementation Project, which was designed to improve the oral health of the maternal and child health population, and of project results. The report

also discusses background, focus group testing and communications messaging, a 2018 environmental scan, and the project aim. A project description is included, along with tools used during the project. The report was produced by the American Academy of Pediatrics.



Report to the Congress on Medicaid and CHIP (2021)

This **report** focuses on aspects of Medicaid's mission to ensure access to high-quality health services and the program's future as a major health care payer driving health system change toward value. The report focuses on topics of interest to Congress, including Medicaid's responsiveness during economic downturns; concerns about high rates of maternal morbidity and mortality; improving hospital payment policy for the nation's safety net hospitals, and the integration of care for people who are dually eligible for Medicaid and Medicare. The report was produced by the Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission.

Title V National Performance Measure 13 (Oral Health): Fiscal Year 2021 Snapshot (2022)

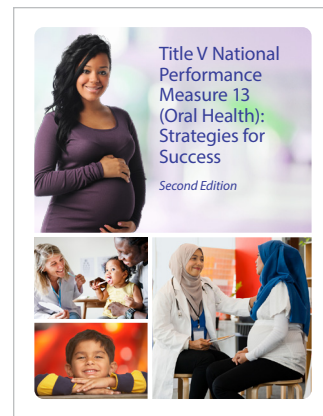
This **report** offers a snapshot of states' experiences with implementing strategies to address the national performance measure on oral health (NPM 13). It presents challenges, lessons learned, and accomplishments in promoting preventive dental visits for pregnant women and children and adolescents, ages 1 through 17. The report introduces the topic and provides background; presents information about the Title V Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant Program; and discusses methods, limitations,



results, and next steps for states. The report was produced by the National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center. [Funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau]

Title V National Performance Measure 13 (Oral Health): Strategies for Success (2021)

This **practice guide** provides information to help state Title V maternal and child health programs in their implementation of the national performance measure on oral health (NPM 13). It provides sample strategies for addressing NPM 13.1 (preventive dental visits for pregnant women) and 13.2 (preventive dental visits for children and adolescents, ages 1–17). It also provides sample evidence-based or evidence-informed strategy measures (ESMs), possible data sources for ESMs, and





a list of resources. Programs can also use this information to assist in the implementation of oral-health-related state performance measures. The practice guide was produced by the National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center. [Funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau]

Using Teledentistry to Improve Prenatal Care (2022)

This **paper** provides information about how the University of California, Irvine, Family Health Center initiated a program for using teledentistry to improve prenatal care. The paper describes how the health center transitioned to using teledentistry, the mechanics of the program, and results of the change to date. Considerations for establishing a teledentistry program are discussed. The paper was produced by the National Network for Oral Health Access.

State

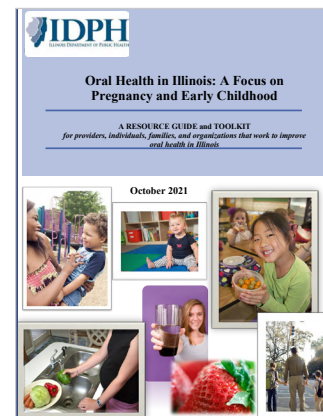
MI Mom's Mouth: Michigan's Perinatal Oral Health Medicaid Utilization Dashboard (N.d.)

This **dashboard** shows trends in oral health care use among pregnant women enrolled in Medicaid in Michigan. Data, including data on use rates from 2018 through 2021, are presented by geographic region and race. Data are obtained through a data-use agreement

from the Michigan Health Data Warehouse with the Susan B. Meister Child Health Evaluation and Research Center at the University of Michigan and are updated biannually. The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services manages the dashboard.

Oral Health in Illinois: A Focus on Pregnancy and Early Childhood (2021)

This **resource guide** includes tools to improve the oral health status of women of childbearing age, pregnant women, infants, and young children in Illinois. It discusses health information for women of reproductive age and pregnant women; the role of health professionals in improving the oral health of pregnant women, infants, and young children; prescribing opioids for women of reproductive age; and progress toward improving oral health in Illinois. State guidelines for policy and practice are included. The resource guide was produced by the Illinois Department of Public Health. [Partially funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau]



Oral Health Training for Community Organizations (2022)

This **training** provides information to improve women's oral health through education, collaboration, and integration of oral health care into prenatal care and primary care. It includes reasons that preventive oral health care is important and key messages to use with pregnant women and parents of infants. It also reviews basic concepts related to oral health in pregnant women, infants, and children and discusses the importance of the dental home and of providing referrals to dentists. The training was produced by From the First Tooth. [Partially funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau]

Journal Articles

Azarshahri A, Rainchuso L, Vineyard J, Giblin-Scanlon L. 2022. Postpartum U.S. women's oral health knowledge, attitudes, and practices during pregnancy. *Maternal and Child Health Journal* 26(6):1339–1349.

This article discusses oral health knowledge, attitudes, and practices of women who gave birth in the United States within the past 2 years and evaluates factors affecting women's use of oral health care during pregnancy. It also reviews the percentage of pregnant women who visited the dentist during pregnancy and use of oral health care during pregnancy.

Barillas W, Lee H. 2022. Maternal oral health framework: Integration of oral health into perinatal care. *Journal of Public Health Policy* 43:696–702.

This article describes a framework emphasizing a broad societal perspective on and approach to integrating oral health care into perinatal care to promote the health of mothers and their young children. The article provides information about why oral health and maternal health are important and elements of the framework.

Franklin AE, Challa S, Marwaha RS. 2022. Dental care for pregnant patients: A survey to assess the current practices of Alabama dentists. *General Dentistry* 70(4): 16–21.

This article discusses the results of a survey instrument distributed to 472 Alabama Academy of General Dentistry members to assess practices and barriers related to providing oral health care for pregnant women. It offers information about survey respondents' demographics, current practices and perceived barriers to providing care for pregnant women, and self-reported competence in providing care to this population. It also discusses factors related to dentists' self-described competence.

Lee H, Tranby E, Shi L. 2022. Dental visits during pregnancy: Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System analysis 2012–2015. *JDR Clinical and Translational Research* 7(4):379–388.

This article provides information about oral health care use before and during pregnancy, barriers to care, and disparities in care, as well as about whether there are persistent disparities in use of care by race/ethnicity and Medicaid status. It also offers information



about whether women received needed oral health care during these periods. Data were obtained from the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System for 2012 through 2015.

Puett S, Tellez M, Byrd G, Weintraub JA, Ciszek B, Phillips C, Boggess K, Quinonez R. 2022. [Retrospective study of prenatal and postnatal gaps in oral health care utilization: Medicaid policy implications](#). *Maternal and Child Health Journal* 26(3):642–648.

This article discusses the frequency and timing of dental treatment among pregnant and postpartum women served through the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Prenatal Oral Health Program dental clinic in the context of North Carolina dental Medicaid policies. It includes information on the percentage of women in the program who had at least one dental visit and who completed their treatment as well as on the most common visit types (e.g., preventive visits, restorative visits). The absence of a uniform federal regulation for Medicaid dental coverage for pregnant women is also discussed.

Testa A, Ganson KT, Jackson DB, Bojorquez-Ramirez P, Weiser SD, Nagata JM. 2022. [Food insecurity and oral health care experiences during pregnancy: Findings from the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System](#). *Journal of the American Dental Association* 153(6):503–510.



This article examines the connection between food insecurity and women’s oral health care experiences during pregnancy. It discusses the likelihood that women experiencing food insecurity, compared with those not experiencing food insecurity, know that it is important to take care of their oral health, have talked about oral health with an oral health professional, received dental prophylaxis during pregnancy, report needing to visit a dentist for a problem, and report visiting a dentist for a problem.

Cite as

Holt K, Battani K, Barzel R. 2023. *Promoting Oral Health During Pregnancy: Update on Activities—February 2023*. Washington, DC: National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center.

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This publication was supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of an annual award totaling \$1,321,950 with no funding from nongovernmental sources. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, or endorsement by, HRSA, HHS, or the U.S. government. For more information, please visit www.HRSA.gov.

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