

Dental Workforce in CT

SustiNet Workforce Task Force Webinar

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**Connecticut State
Dental Association**

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President Elect

Dental Workforce in Connecticut

Oral Health in Connecticut

Connecticut Department of Public Health (2007)

- Ratio of practicing dentists to population in the state is second highest in the nation
- Connecticut ranks first in the nation in **adult** visits to a dental clinic or a dentist within the past year

However...the report also indicated that “...less than half of children aged 3 to 19 enrolled in HUSKY A received any dental care in a one year period.”



Access to Care for Children

Prior to 2007, only **150** dentists participated in HUSKY A serving **44,088** children. Why so few dentists?

- **Low reimbursement rates:** CT had some of the lowest Medicaid dental reimbursement rates in the nation, with the last increase coming in 1993
- **Administrative barriers:** Enrolling in Medicaid program was cumbersome, and dealing with several managed care organizations was difficult.



The Promise

- **2006:** a coalition of oral health champions, including the CSDA and other organizations, were advocating for increased reimbursement rates
- **March 2007:** as the Legislature was preparing to raise reimbursement fees, the CSDA publicly pledged to increase dentist participation in the Medicaid program:

“..the dentists of Connecticut will step up to the plate once the rates have been raised...We, the CSDA and the State of Connecticut cannot fail another generation of Children”.



The Legislature Acts

- **April 2008:** the Legislature and Governor appropriated \$20 million for increasing reimbursement fees paid to dentists participating in HUSKY.
- **September 2008:** dental services are carved out of HUSKY/Medicaid by the State and the CT Dental Health Partnership is established to provide dental care independently from managed healthcare.

...effectively eliminating the primary barriers to Medicaid participation by dentists



The Results

As of today...

- More than **1,000** dental providers actively participating in the Partnership – a gain of more than **800** providers.
- Nearly **73,000 children** are now receiving dental care through the Dental Health Partnership, a **60% increase** since the program's inception.
- Since September 2008, dentists provided nearly **\$23.75 million** in care to children in the Partnership program.



The Results

- More children are being seen in private dental offices and school-based clinics.
- All Partnership patients with “emergency” cases have received appointments within 24 hours.
- Patients with routine dental issues have received appointments within 18 days – closely mirrors wait times for privately paying patients.



The Work Continues

- CSDA is focusing on recruiting specialty providers (oral surgeons, endodontists, etc.)
- CSDA will continue to advocate for school-based dental clinics, to increase utilization of dental services for school aged children

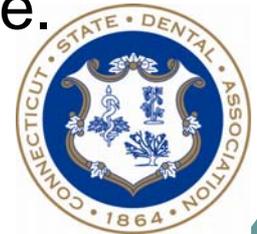
...but we're not finished!



The Work Continues

Although CT ranks #1 in nation for adult visits to the dentist...

- CTMOM and other CSDA pro-bono clinics have glaringly illustrated the serious need for adult dental health care.
- CSDA will continue to work with the Governor and Legislature to come up with innovative solutions for adults who do not qualify for state assisted programs yet cannot afford to pay out-of-pocket for dental care.



Thank You

Connecticut State Dental Association

“The trusted Leader & Voice for Oral Healthcare in Connecticut”

