Medical Assistance Program Oversight Council

Oral Health Response During COVID-19
First Wave

December 2020

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CONNECTICUT DENTAL HEALTH PARTNERSHIP
the dental plan for HUSKY Health

BeneCare DENTAL PLANS
Agenda

1. COVID-19 FIRST WAVE IMPACTS & MITIGATION STRATEGIES
   - CTDHP Operations
   - Access to Care
   - Dental Service Delivery
   - Members

2. NEXT STEPS AND UPDATES
   - Planning efforts and updates
ABOUT THE CONNECTICUT DENTAL HEALTH PARTNERSHIP

• Connecticut Dental Health Partnership
  ◦ One Provider Network
  ◦ One Fee Schedule
  ◦ One Set of Benefits
  ◦ One Set of Administrative Rules

• CTDHP is comprised of:
  ◦ Member Services - Local Call Center
  ◦ Network Development/Provider Education
  ◦ Dental Health Care Specialists- Care Coordination & Outreach
  ◦ Prior Authorization & Utilization Management
  ◦ Grievance and Appeals

• CTDHP’s focus:
  ◦ Timely and proximate access for members
  ◦ Efforts to increase overall utilization and use of preventive services
  ◦ Referral and intensive care management supports for members
  ◦ Integration of oral health in primary care settings
  ◦ Improved outcomes and controlled costs
COVID-19 AND ORAL HEALTH

• Routine, preventative dentistry has been delayed due to **dental practices closing March-June** following Executive Orders to “stay safe, stay home.”

• Dental practices re-opening and following CDC and American Dental Association guidelines has resulted in **lower capacity and lower patient volume**.
  ○ Based on the ADA Health Policy Institute tracking of the economic impact on dental practices, in November 60.6% of CT dental practices reported being open, but with lower patient volume than usual.*
  ○ 75% of dentists surveyed by CTDHP Dental Policy Advisory Committee reported pre-screening patients twice before encounters and 100% of Dentists surveyed noted they are complying with CDC and ADA guidelines.**

• **Dentistry is safe, delaying care could escalate to more serious dental issues** and potentially impact overall health.
  ○ COVID-19 rate among dentists is less than 1% according to ADA.
  ○ CT State Dental Association commissioned survey indicates among patients that had visited the dentists in the months since COVID-19, 6 in 10 said they were extremely comfortable or very comfortable at their dentist appointments.***

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* ADA Health Policy Institute COVID-19 Economic Impact on Dental Practices Wave 18, Week of November 16  
** Survey: CT Medicaid Dentist Sept 2020 CTDHP  
*** “Survey: CT Residents Trust Their Dentists to Assure Safety” The Patch November 23, 2020
COVIF-19 FIRST WAVE IMPACTS ON CTDHP OPERATIONS

• Operations moved to Work From Home March 25th after the Governor's "Stay Safe, Stay Home" Executive Order.

• Incoming Call Volume to CTDHP Call Center has experienced significantly more call volume after April 2020 than during any month in 2019.
  ○ Root cause analysis suggests increased calls were related to restarting of service delivery and higher Medicaid volumes.

• Prior Authorizations and Grievance/Appeals Teams have returned to pre-First Wave volume starting in September.
Outreach team quickly pivoted to virtual outreach modalities. Outreach activities experienced lowest dip in activity in April (25 activities) however, efficiencies gained in less travel time has resulted in higher outreach activities during February-October 2020 than in 2019.
- 912 activities in 2020 v. 779 activities in 2019

Dental Health Care Specialists (DHCS) continue to provide longitudinal care coordination to members experiencing acute oral health needs, presence of behavioral health challenges, distinct special needs, and co-morbid medical conditions.
- DHCS report increased complaints of jaw clenching, and teeth grinding. This aligns with literature suggesting pandemic related- stress is manifesting in physical signs and symptoms.
CTDHP Mitigation Efforts During First Wave of Pandemic

DON'T WAIT TILL IT HURTS CAMPAIGN

eNewsletter in English and Spanish sent to members with emails highlighting dental office safety practices during pandemic, ED avoidance, and promoting preventative care.

All members receiving care coordination received specialized COVID-19 letter articulating safety, expectations and precautions in dental service delivery.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outreach Type</th>
<th>Volume</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>eNewsletter</td>
<td>170,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>23,500</td>
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TRUSTED PERSON MODEL OUTREACH

Outreach team presenting at established systems of care/collaborative groups, community based organizations that serve Medicaid population, reinforcing safety, expectations, and adaptations in dentistry service delivery to communicate to organizations' population/clients.

Examples: Our Piece of the Pie Youth Programs, Early Head Start, WIC, Christian Community Action, OB/GYN Offices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outreach Type</th>
<th>Volume</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conference Calls</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ePresentations</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Health Kits</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PHONE CAMPAIGNS

Automated calls if:
- Members not compliant with preventative dental schedule
- Adult Members close to benefit limit max
- Members with problem-focused exam
- Members seen in ED for dental services

In-Person calls for:
- New members identified by CHN as not having established Dental Home
- Prenatal Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campaign Type</th>
<th>Successful Call Volume</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Automated Calls</td>
<td>209,675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Member</td>
<td>6,803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prenatal</td>
<td>9,675</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jan-Oct 2020
• Access to Care/Network Adequacy has remained above the contractual standard
  ○ 100% of membership have access to 1 provider within 20 miles
  ○ 98.79% of membership have access to 2 providers within 5 miles.

• Most offices have fully re-opened following CDC/ADA Guidelines
  ○ All but 1 FQHC has resumed normal operations.

• Due to school closures, School Based Health Centers had reduced oral health screenings, many are now fully operational.

• The ABC Program (assessment and fluoride varnish application at Pediatric Well Child Visits) saw its lowest rates of service in April and May, but has since rebounded. This could be linked to reduced well-child visits.
Guidelines by the American Dental Association Advisory Task Force and CDC have reduced concurrent patient volumes and office capacity:

- Waiting rooms closed
- Prescreening in parking lot or at door with temperature check and exposure questions
- Full PPE, changed for every patient and for every staff member that patient exposure
- Using high-speed evacuation for dental procedures producing an aerosol.
- Having patients rinse with a 1% hydrogen peroxide solution before each appointment
- Cleaning and disinfecting public areas frequently, including door handles, chairs and bathrooms.
• Utilization significantly reduced with lowest encounters in March-June, as expected with offices servicing only urgent/acute needs.

• ED utilization rates remained low (0.1298 per 1,000 members) during the first wave, suggesting member behavior was appropriate in seeking care at dental offices to meet urgent needs and avoiding the ED.

• CTDHP’s Care Coordination team engages with patients post-ED visit via phone, email, or letter to coordinate linkage to dentists and oral health specialists. During this time period, our Dental Health Care Specialists report appropriate ED utilization, working critical cases (e.g., motor vehicle accidents with oral trauma, systemic infection).
COVID-19 FIRST WAVE IMPACTS ON MEMBERS

Context:
• In Federal Fiscal Year 2019, CMS ranked CT #2 in percentage of Medicaid Eligible members aged 1-20 who received preventative dental services. CT at 61.5% of population. 12.4% points over the median.

CTDHP Dental Health Care Specialist (DHCS) received referral from New Haven school based dental program. Children aged 6, 8, 9 receiving HUSKY Health needed to establish dental home and engage in treatment plan. The family primarily spoke Pashtu and had not engaged in any oral health treatment prior to screening from the school based dental program.

DHCS secured pediatric dentistry appointments with translation supports in March. Offices were then closed to non-urgent/ acute visits. To keep family engaged, the DHCS contacted the father weekly to check in on the family to identify changes in condition/acuity, appointment time changes due to dental office closures, and assess for social service needs. DHCS provided referrals to SNAP, food pantries, and offered encouragement for the family to contact school to get help with distance-based learning for his children.

As the dental office was working to re-open, appointments were rescheduled several times. Appointments for all three children were completed in October (eight months from original appointment) and treatment plan to start in November. The family continues to engage with CTDHP and the school based health center.
CTDHP NEXT STEPS & PLANNING

• Addressing Oral Health Inequity:
  ◦ Enabling CTDHP staff to assess for social determinants of health and provide referrals. Collaboration with United Way underway.

  ◦ Oral Health Equity Plan in development, receiving support from Connecting to Care CT led by Dr. Cecilia Frometa at Yale University School of Medicine/Child Study Center. Kicking off assessing efforts against national standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) this month.

  ◦ Continued data analysis to report on utilization patterns along racial/ethnic and geographical data sets to plan and execute targeted interventions at the micro and local level.
Racial inequalities exposed during the pandemic further illuminated health disparities nationally and within Connecticut.

However, utilization analysis initiated in summer 2020 suggests among the adult population the Hispanic, Multi-Racial Non-Hispanic, and Black/African American Non-Hispanic populations have the higher utilization rates as compared to White/Caucasian Non-Hispanic and Unknown, Non-Hispanic populations. This confirms earlier analysis conducted by the CT Voices for Children in 2016.

Geo-spatial analysis is currently underway to develop local and micro-targeted interventions and campaigns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>24 Month Utilization Rate</th>
<th>Difference from Highest Utilizing Population</th>
<th>Difference From Next Highest Ranked Population</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>57.83%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multiracial Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>56.12%</td>
<td>-1.71%</td>
<td>-1.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>55.68%</td>
<td>-2.15%</td>
<td>-0.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>54.34%</td>
<td>-3.49%</td>
<td>-1.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
<td>53.42%</td>
<td>-4.41%</td>
<td>-0.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American/Alaskan Native Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>51.77%</td>
<td>-6.06%</td>
<td>-1.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White/Caucasian Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>48.75%</td>
<td>-9.08%</td>
<td>-3.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>47.50%</td>
<td>-10.33%</td>
<td>-1.25%</td>
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CTDHP NEXT STEPS & PLANNING

• Strategic Partnerships:

○ CTDHP and Food Pantries: Providing CTDHP toothbrushes, toothpaste, and materials highlighting safety at dental offices.

○ CTDHP and ConnIE (HIE): Working with DSS and partners to enable medical and oral health integration and real time alerts for oral health ED visits for the CTDHP care coordination team to quickly respond to members.

○ Beacon and Community Health Network: Collaborating on oral health case conferences by CTDHP Dental Health Care Specialists.

○ CTDHP and UCONN Health Leaders (UCHL): Support the pre-med group in adding oral health in patient assessments.

○ Submission of Expression of Interest (EOI) to CMS/CHIP Oral Health Affinity Group to "Advancing Prevention and Reducing Childhood Caries in Medicaid"
Remember.....don't wait till it hurts

Questions?

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