

# The Burroughs Report on National Oral Health Policy

Melissa Burroughs, Director of Public Policy  
CareQuest Institute for Oral Health

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# CareQuest Institute: *A Catalyst for Systems Change*

To drive meaningful change, we advocate for policy changes, support communities through grants, conduct research, educate providers, and invest in innovation.

Collaboration and partnership are key to achieving our mission — to improve the oral health of all.



# What is going on in Washington DC?



# What does the federal landscape mean for oral health?

**Veterans' Dental  
Access**

**Medicaid Funding**

**Water Fluoridation**

**Oral Health +  
Health Agencies**

**Chronic Disease/  
Nutrition**

**Medicare Dental**

# Veterans' Dental Care Access

## *Addressing Barriers to Care*

VA dental care often comes with long wait times or limited provider locations

Interest from Congress and the Trump Administration

Not all veterans who qualify for VA medical care qualify for VA dental care, but more do post-PACT Act



# Medicaid Funding

## *“Budget Reconciliation” and Medicaid Dental Benefits*

Political negotiations ongoing, details still vague

Any cuts to Medicaid threaten states’ ability to cover adult dental services

## ***As G.O.P. Eyes Medicaid Cuts, States Could Be Left With Vast Shortfalls***

U.S. W/ Cl Turke’ Up  
Republicans have proposed lowering the federal share of costs for Medicaid expansions, which could reshape the program by gutting one of the Affordable Care Act’s major provisions.

**Medicaid insures 1 in 5 Americans. This is how the GOP budget could impact coverage.**

## **Medicaid Cuts Appear Inevitable. States May Pick Up the Bill**

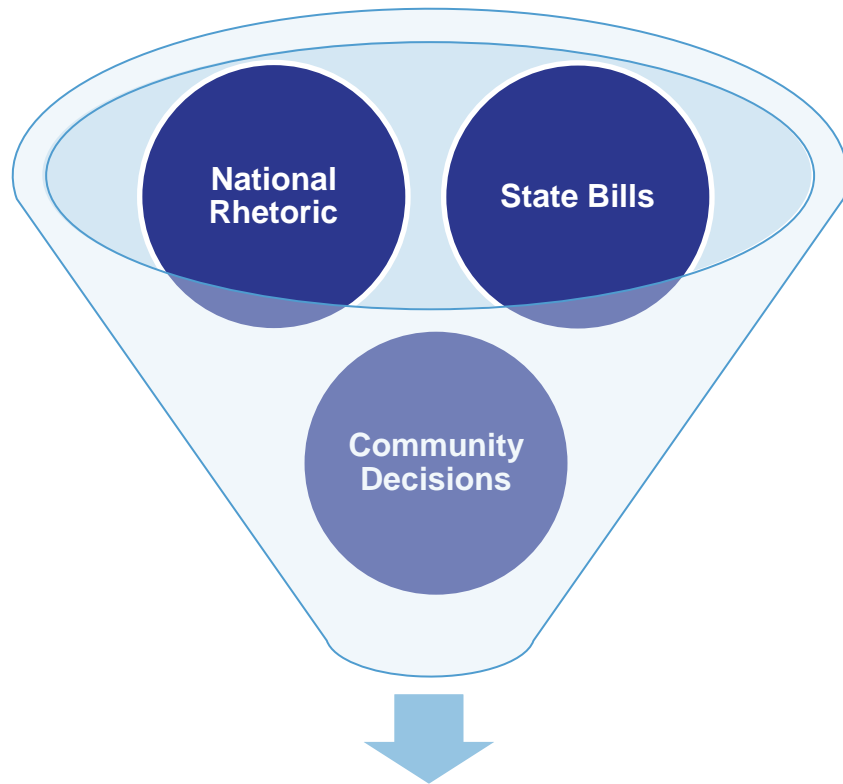
Republican Lawmaker Tells Trump He May Vote Against GOP Budget Bill Over Medicaid Cuts

Johnson rules out steepest Medicaid cut options

The speaker also said in an interview with CNN that he doesn’t expect the Senate will make changes to the House’s budget resolution.

**Potential funding cuts could threaten Medi-Cal’s dental patients**

# Water Fluoridation



***Education and Engagement***

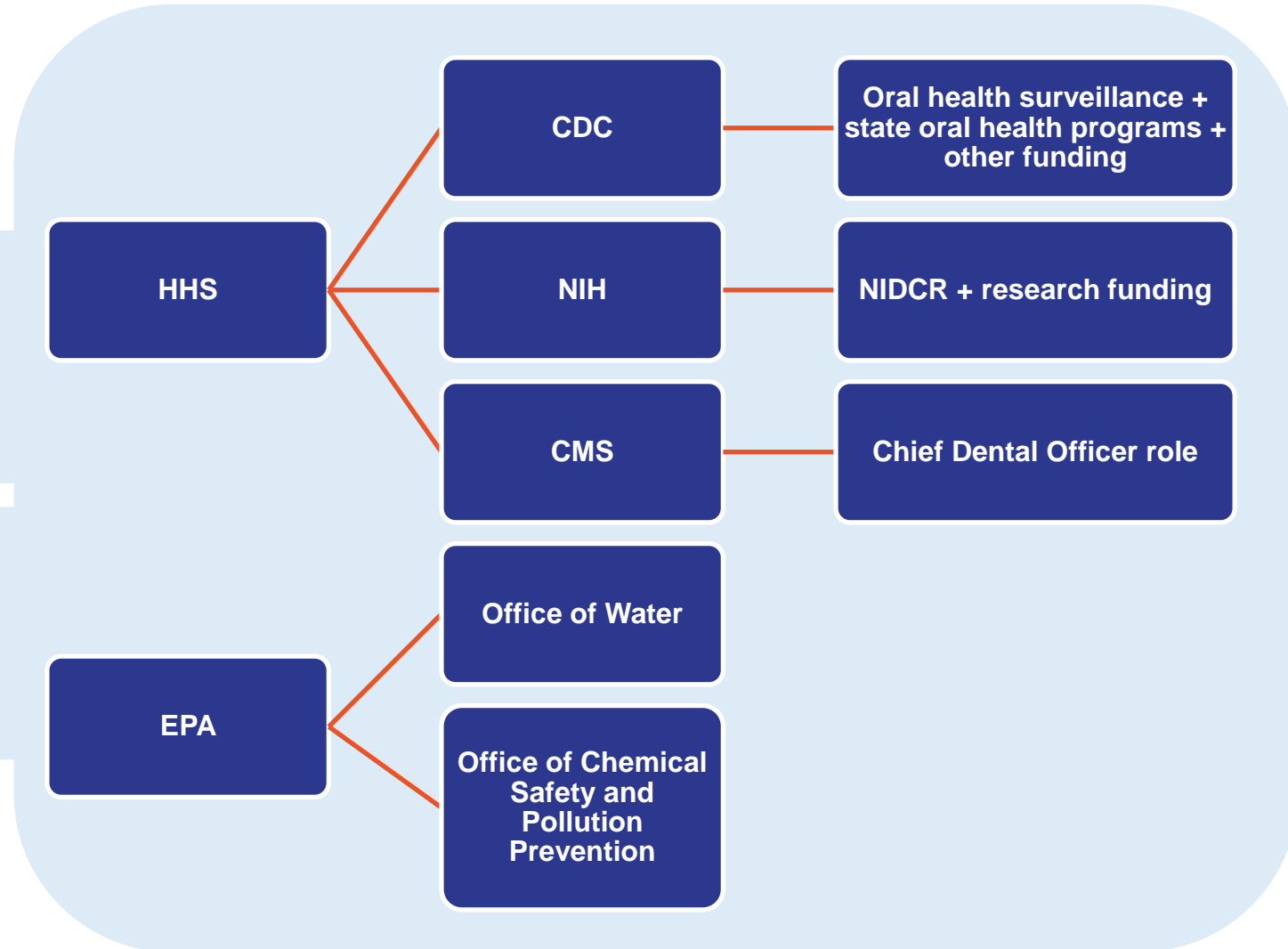


# Oral Health + Federal Agencies

## Agency Activity to Watch

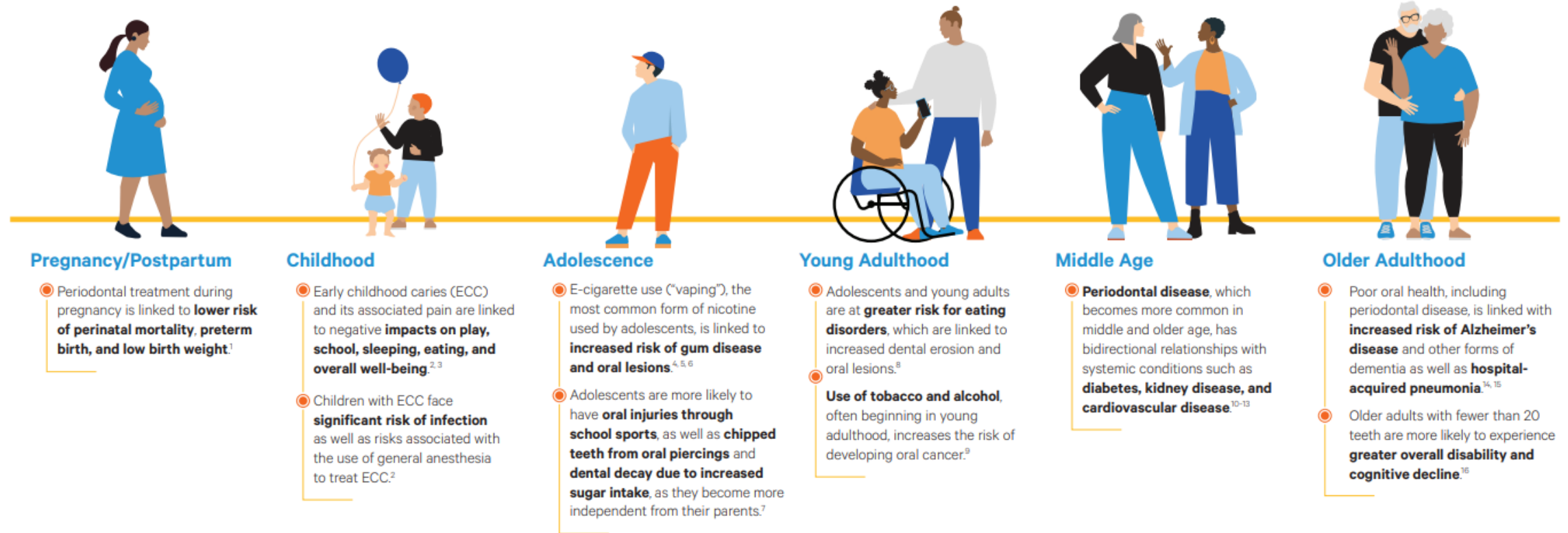
Oral health leadership, funding opportunities, data availability, etc., may or may not change

Actions related to CWF could come out of EPA but not likely



# Chronic Disease and Nutrition Efforts

## The Oral-Systemic Connection Across the Lifespan



# Medicare Dental Coverage



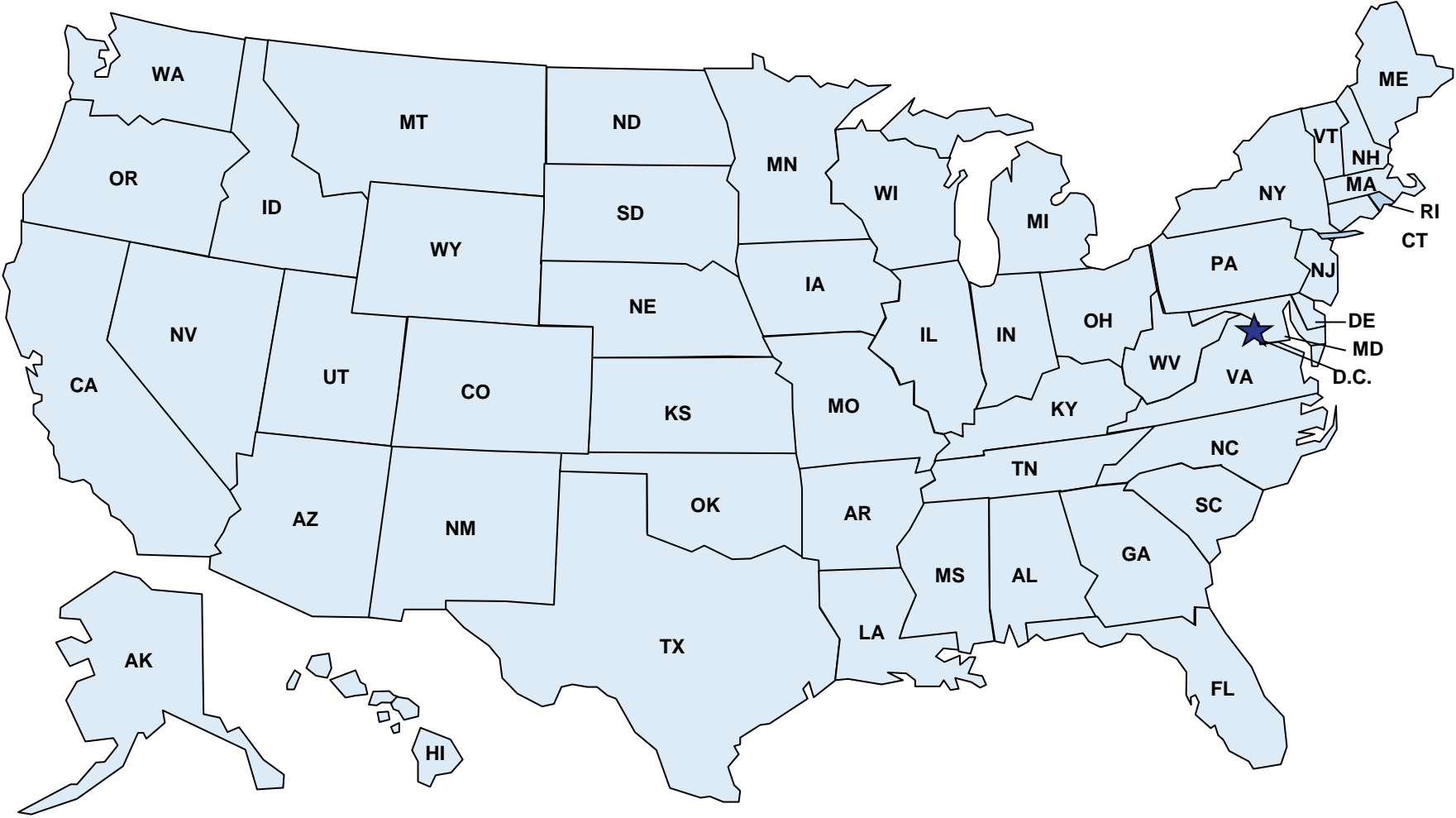
## *Short- and Long-Term Efforts*

### **Medicare “medically necessary” dental coverage**

- Implementation
- Adding “clinical scenarios”

### **Comprehensive Medicare dental coverage efforts**

# What is going on in states?



# Hot Topics in State-Level Oral Health Policy

**Medicaid Adult  
Dental Coverage**

**Medicaid  
Provider  
Participation and  
Rate Increases**

**Water  
Fluoridation**

**Dentist and  
Dental Hygienist  
Compacts**

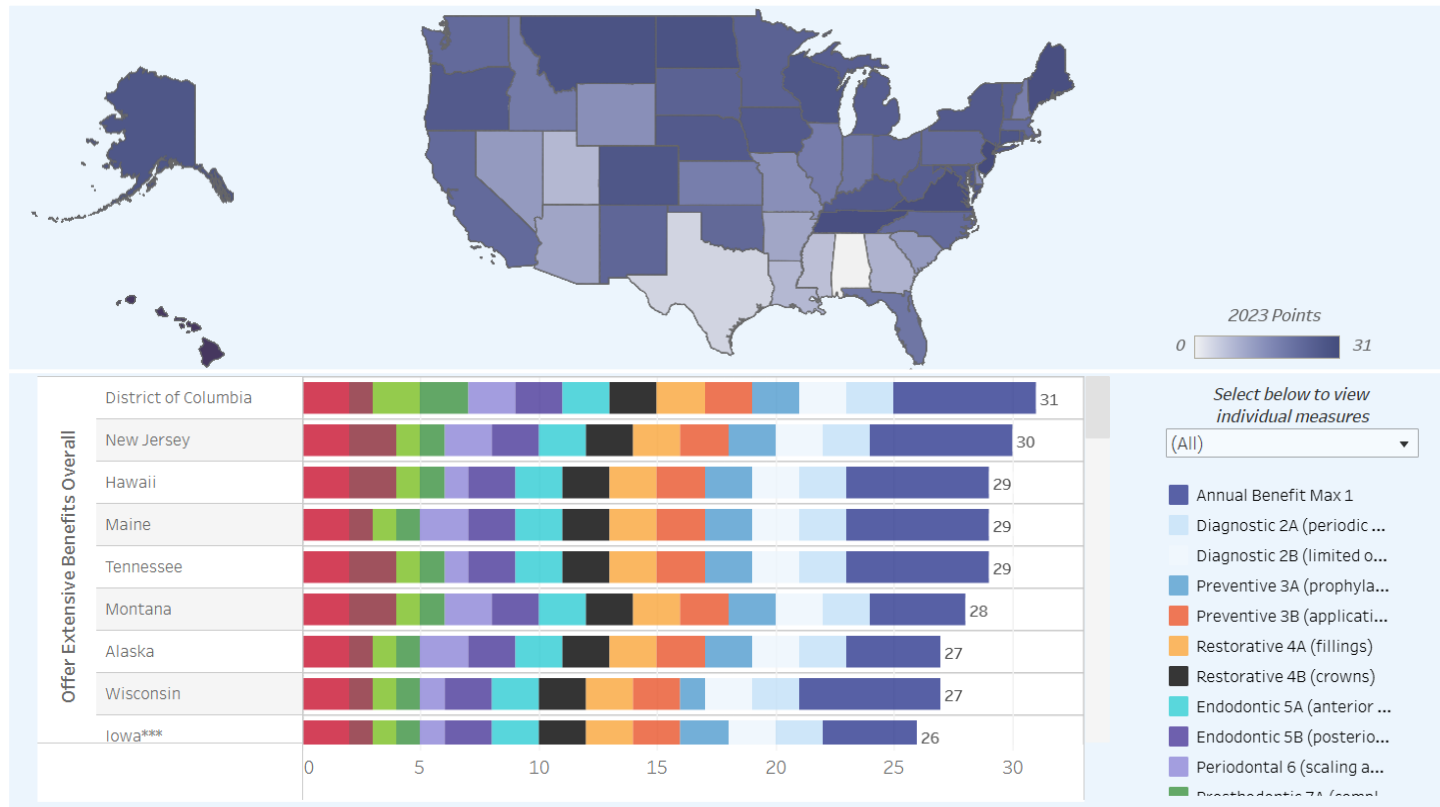
**Veterans' Dental  
Solutions**

**Private Dental  
Insurance**

**Licensure,  
Supervision,  
Scope of Practice  
Issues**

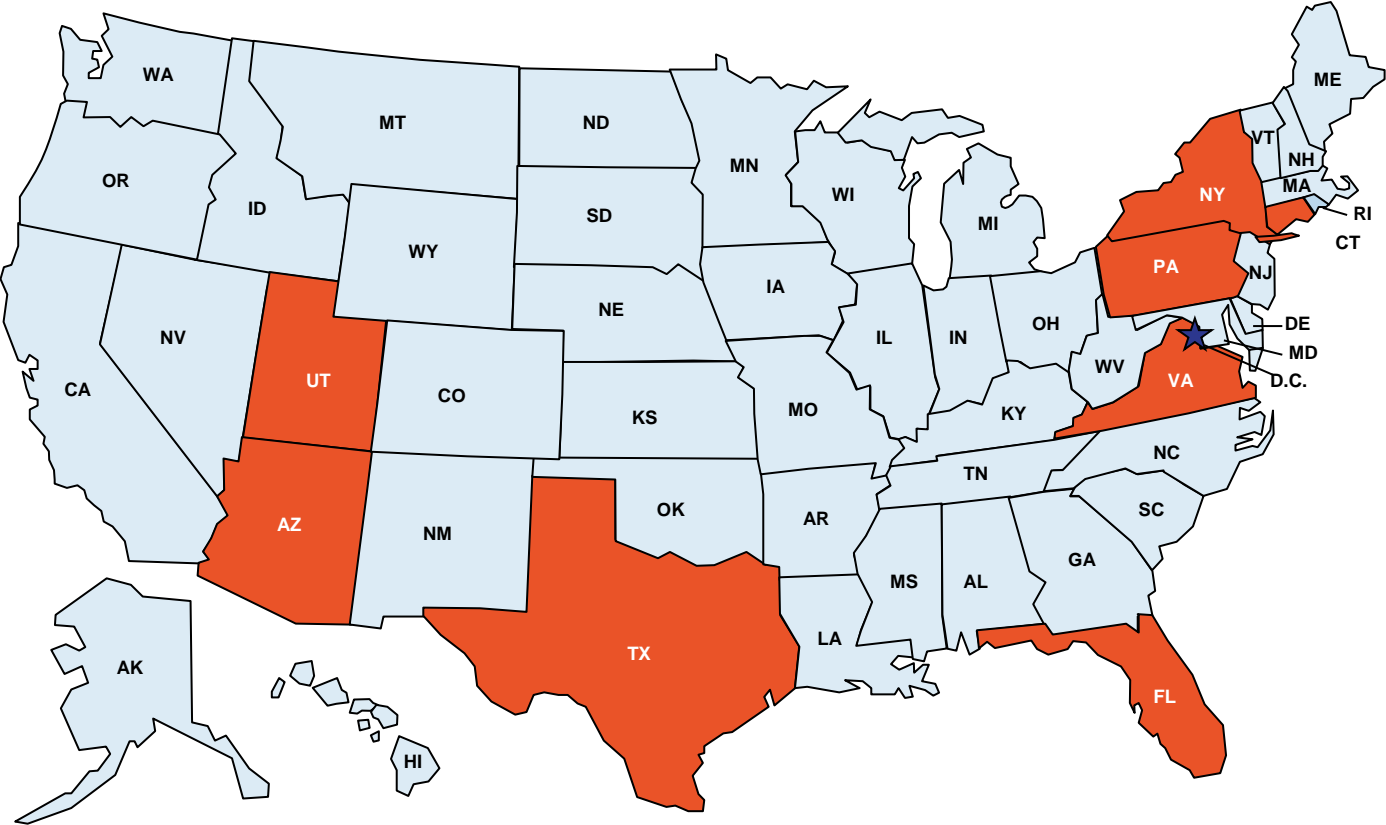
# Current Landscape: Medicaid Adult Dental Benefits

## 2023 Medicaid Adult Dental Coverage Checker



- States with 2024 improvements:**
- CT
  - KS
  - MN
  - NE
  - UT
  - WV

# States We're Watching in 2025: Improving Medicaid Adult Dental Benefits



States pursuing improvements to Medicaid adult dental benefits

- AZ** – Legislation to create an extensive benefit for all adults.
- CT** – Legislation to exclude exams and cleanings from \$1,000 annual benefit cap; provide periodontal treatment and a second annual cleaning for all adults.
- FL** – Legislation to create an extensive benefit for all adults.
- NY** – Legislation to classify implants, replacement dentures, crowns, and root canals as medically necessary dental care and services for coverage under Medicaid.
- PA** – Legislation to reinstate all previously eliminated dental services, eliminate the existing BLE process, and allow for additional services to be covered.
- TX** – Legislation to provide dental benefits through 12 months postpartum (now only provided through 60 days).
- UT** – Waiver approved in January to implement new benefit for all adults in April 2025 (date TBD).
- VA** – Legislation to increase coverage for pregnant and postpartum adults.

# States We're Watching: Threats to Medicaid Adult Dental Coverage

**Budget Deficits**

Colorado

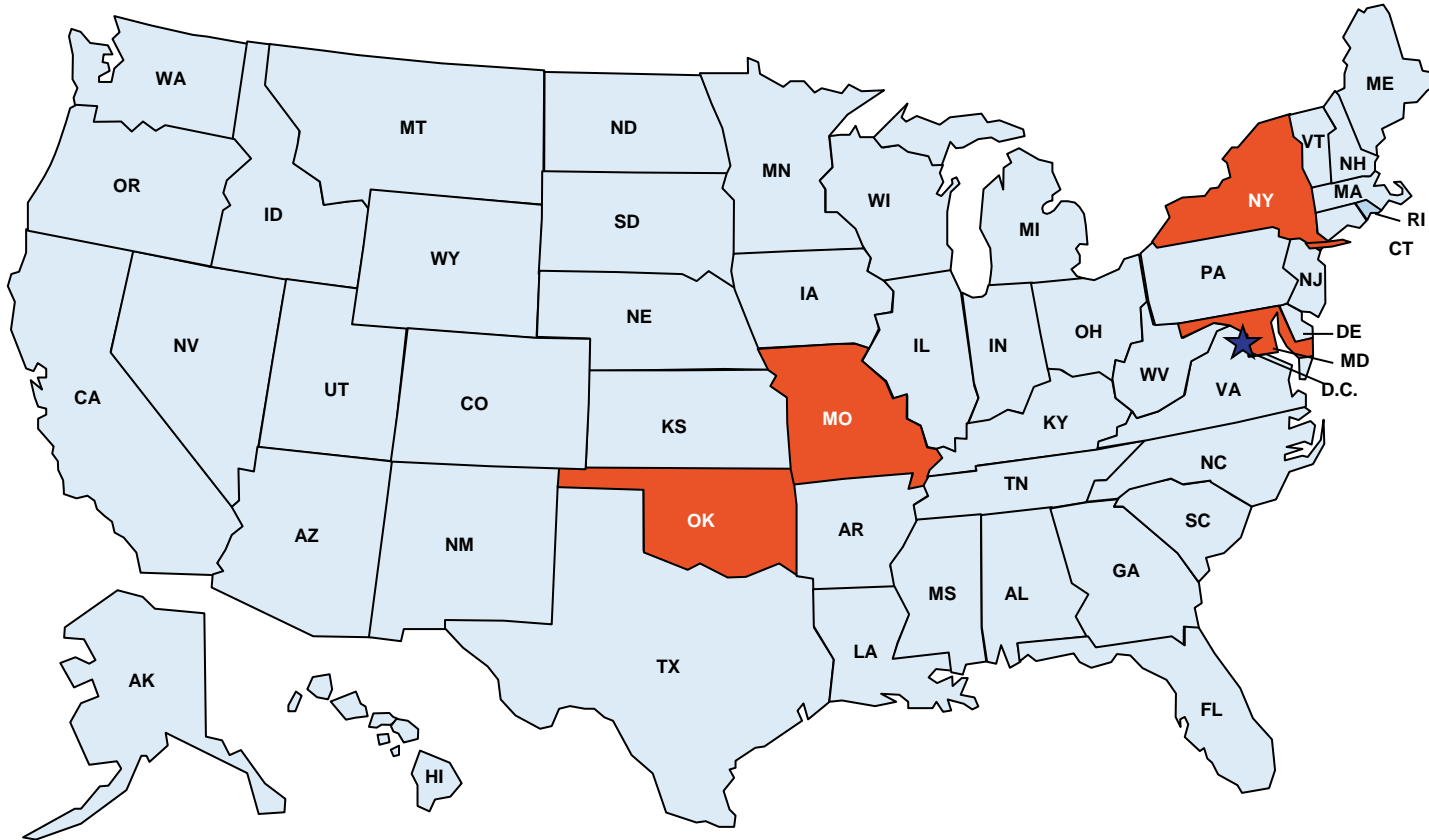
**Medicaid Expansion  
"Trigger Laws"**

Arizona, Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Montana, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Utah, Virginia

**Work Requirements or  
Other Structural Changes**

1115 Waiver processes ongoing

# States We're Watching: Recruitment and Retention Strategies



**MD** – [HB265](#) / [SB456](#) to provide loan repayment for part-time practitioners (See [MDAC 2025 Access to Dental Care Legislative Package](#)).

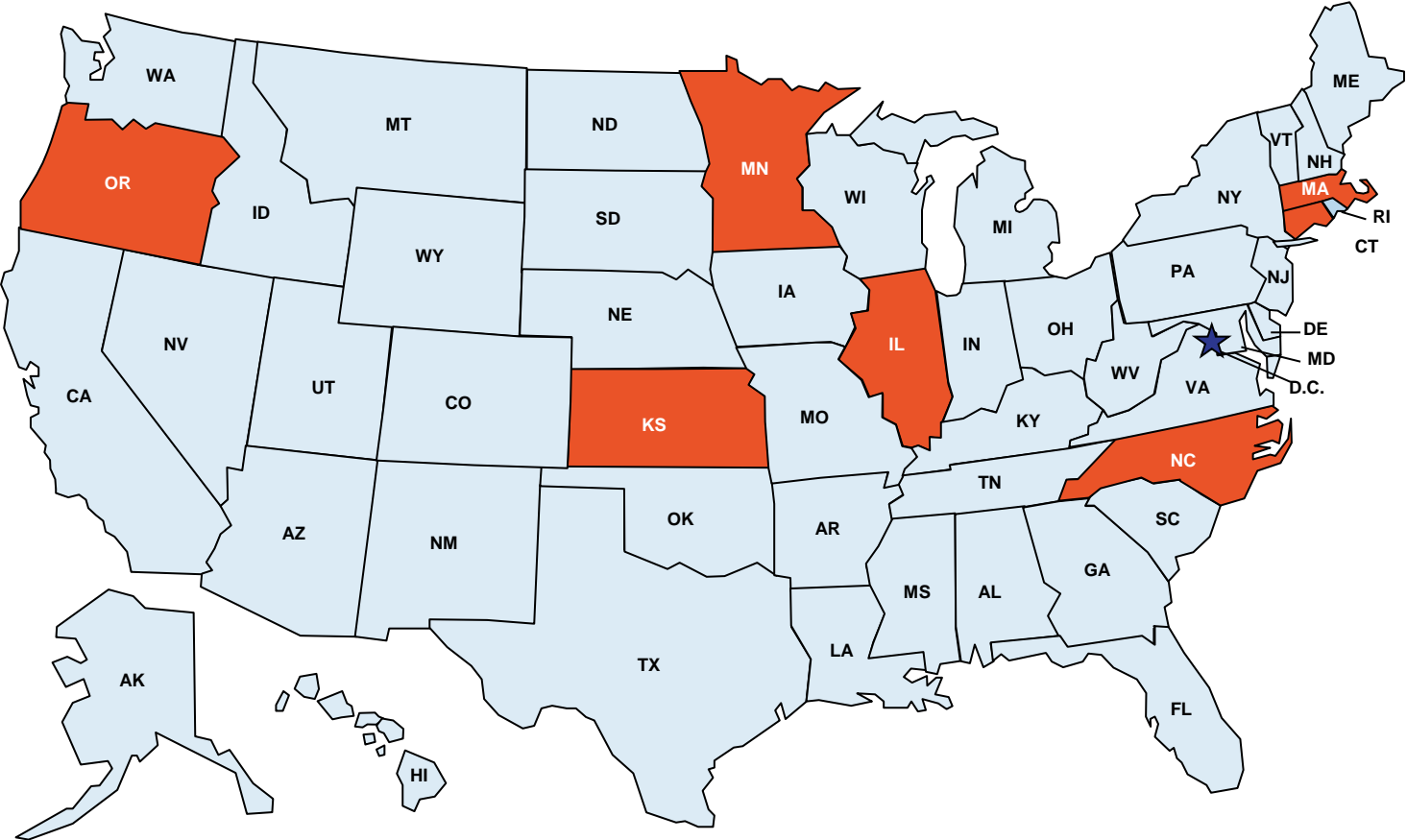
**MO** – [HB720](#) / [SB 635](#) to expand Missouri State Loan Repayment program to include dentists and dental hygienists.

**NY** – [A2446](#) / [S1006](#) to establish the *Take a Look* medical and dental workforce employment tour pilot program.


**NY** – [A1795](#) / [S2662](#) to establish a New York State Dental Faculty Loan Forgiveness Incentive Program.

**OK** – [HB2899](#) Omnibus bill with multiple provisions, including increasing annual loan repayment maximum and expanding number of full-time equivalent dentists who can participate per year.

# States We're Watching: Increasing Reimbursement Rates



- CT** – [HB5581](#)
- IL** – [HB1881](#)\*
- KS** – Via state budget (See [Oral Health Kansas](#))
- MA** – Awaiting bill number
- MN** – [SF275](#)
- MT** – [LC3737](#)
- NC** – [H60](#)
- OR** – [HB2225](#) / [SB609](#), [HB2597](#)

 States pursuing reimbursement rate increases

# Soap Box



# Stay Connected

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Sign up for the Quarterly  
Policy & Advocacy Newsletter



### Medicaid Adult Dental Benefits

Offered to Specific Beneficiary Groups  
as of December 2023

Medicaid adult dental benefits are classified as "optional" by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). This means that states can limit the type and/or number of services they cover as well as the beneficiary groups they cover. States can also exclude adult dental services entirely.

Many states offer dental benefits to all adult Medicaid beneficiaries ages 21-64. Some of these states also provide additional benefits to specific beneficiary groups, such as more frequent periodontal treatments for adults who are intellectually or developmentally disabled. In other states, coverage is only provided to specific beneficiary groups, such as pregnant and postpartum adults.



The 2023 Rubric for Assessing Extensiveness of State Medicaid Adult Dental Benefits (Rubric) assesses coverage within eight service categories (see Appendix A). Its findings show that 20 states reported that they offer different coverage (i.e., it varies in amount, duration, and/or scope) to specific groups of beneficiaries (see Appendix B) than they offer to other adult beneficiaries ages 21-64.

Among the 20 states offering different coverage, the beneficiary groups they most commonly cover differently are pregnant and postpartum adults, adults with developmental and/or intellectual disabilities, and adults utilizing long-term care.

Additionally, some states offer coverage to adults who are blind (Missouri and Utah), and those experiencing homelessness and/or substance use disorder or mental health conditions (Utah and Vermont).



## Policy & Advocacy

Welcome to the first CareQuest Institute Policy & Advocacy newsletter year, we'll bring you a collection of news, updates, and stories about research, and progress.

September 12, 2024

### Did You Know?

 More than 9 in 10 voters nationwide support adding a dental benefit.

### Your Voice Matters: Elevate Oral Health This Election

With the election right around the corner, now is the time to engage political candidates and raise oral health as a key issue to include in their health policies. Use our template to email the presidential candidates and tell them you support improving dental coverage in Medicare, Medicaid, and for veterans. For more ways to take action, check out our [election engagement toolkit](#).



Email the president



## Melissa's Quick Picks

Melissa Burroughs  
Director, Public Policy

### Voters Strongly Support Increasing Dental Coverage

A new national poll of 1,000 voters commissioned by CareQuest Institute and the Oral Health Progress and Equity Network (OPEN) [shows what voters on opposite sides of the political aisle agree on](#): improving Medicare, veterans' and Medicaid dental coverage.

### Where Do the Presidential Candidates Stand on Oral Health Care?

Oral health is drawing more attention on the national political stage, as more policymakers realize its connection to overall health. This [article looks at what a Harris-Walz ticket could mean](#) for national oral health policies.

### The Ongoing Struggle to Help Veterans Get Dental Care

Veterans have higher rates of tooth decay and gum disease than their civilian peers, but [only 15% are eligible for dental benefits](#) through the VA. [Read more about a veteran's struggle to get dental care.](#)

### Legislation Aims to End the Dental Care Crisis in the US

The [Comprehensive Dental Reform Act of 2024](#) would expand Medicare, Medicaid, and Veterans Health Administration benefits to provide [comprehensive dental coverage](#) to all seniors, veterans, and low-income families.

[carequest.org/resources](https://carequest.org/resources)

[carequest.org/OPEN](https://carequest.org/OPEN)

[carequest.org/register](https://carequest.org/register)

# Questions?



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