

Medicaid Adult Dental Coverage Checker

A brief tutorial

September 2024

Overview of Tools

Rubric for Assessing Extensiveness of State Medicaid Adult Dental Benefits (Rubric)

A [survey tool](#) that defines an extensive Medicaid adult dental benefit and assesses the extensiveness of existing coverage within each state.



Medicaid Adult Dental Coverage Checker

An [interactive tool](#) that displays state-by-state results of the Rubric.

The results represent a snapshot in time and are reflective of coverage offered by each state.

The Coverage Checker currently displays information from the 2020, 2022, and 2023 Rubric.



These tools were developed in partnership with the American Dental Association Health Policy Institute (ADA HPI), Center for Health Care Strategies (CHCS), CareQuest Institute for Oral Health, and an advisory committee of experts in oral health care and state policy.

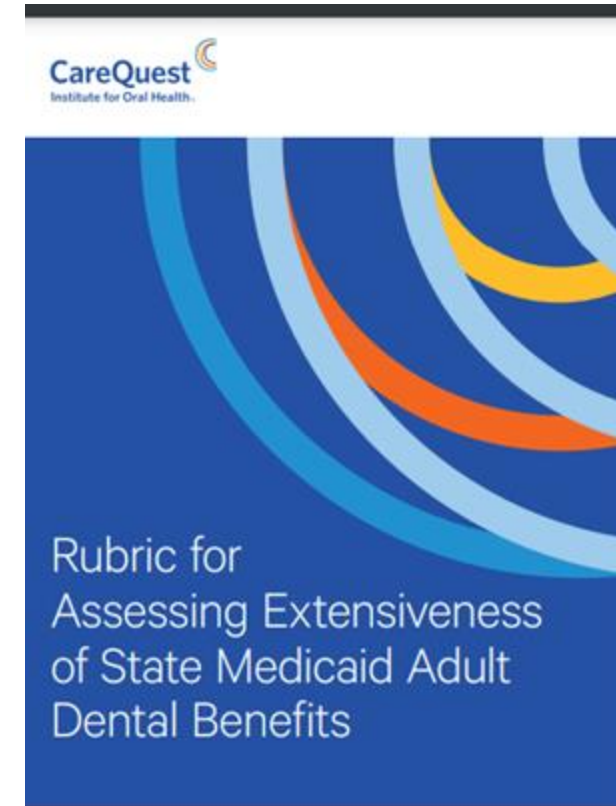
The Rubric

What it is:

- A survey to be completed by state Medicaid dental directors and/or staff.

What it does:

- Defines an extensive Medicaid adult dental benefit.
- Assesses the extensiveness of existing coverage within each state's Medicaid program.



Definition of an Extensive Medicaid Adult Dental Benefit

An extensive dental benefit is one that provides coverage for a range of dental procedures considered adequate for the prevention of disease and promotion of oral health; the restoration of oral structures to health and function; and the treatment of emergency/urgent conditions for the largest group of Categorically Needy Medicaid adult beneficiaries ages 21-64 covered by the state's Medicaid program.

To meet this definition, states must:

- cover specific procedures and services, including allowed frequency, in eight specific service categories; and
- have an annual benefit maximum greater than or equal to \$1,000.

Service Categories:

Annual benefit maximum
Diagnostic services
Preventive services
Restorative services
Endodontic services
Periodontal services
Prosthodontic services
Extraction services

The Medicaid Adult Dental Coverage Checker

What it is:

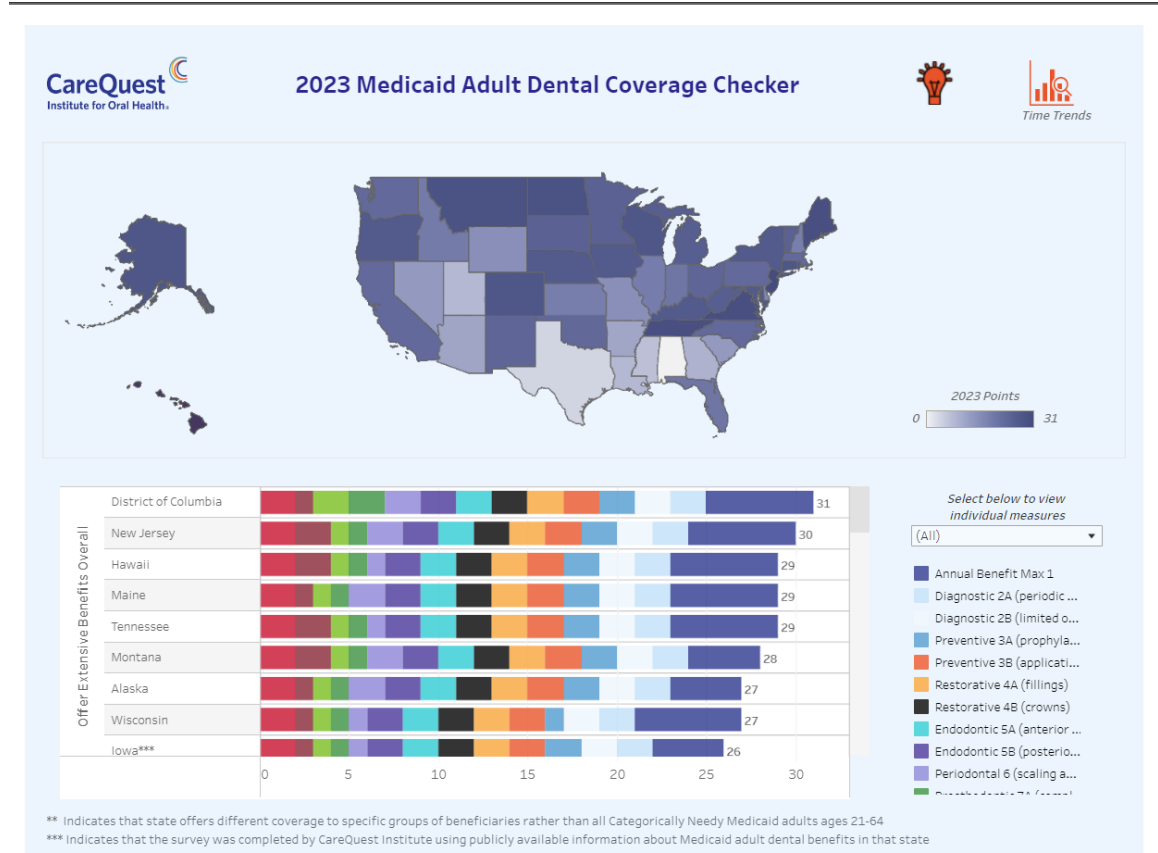
- An interactive tool that displays state-by-state results of the Rubric

The results represent a snapshot in time and are reflective of coverage offered by each state at the time of completion.

The results display benefits on a continuum from no benefits to extensive.

Visit the [2023 Medicaid Adult Dental Coverage Checker](#)

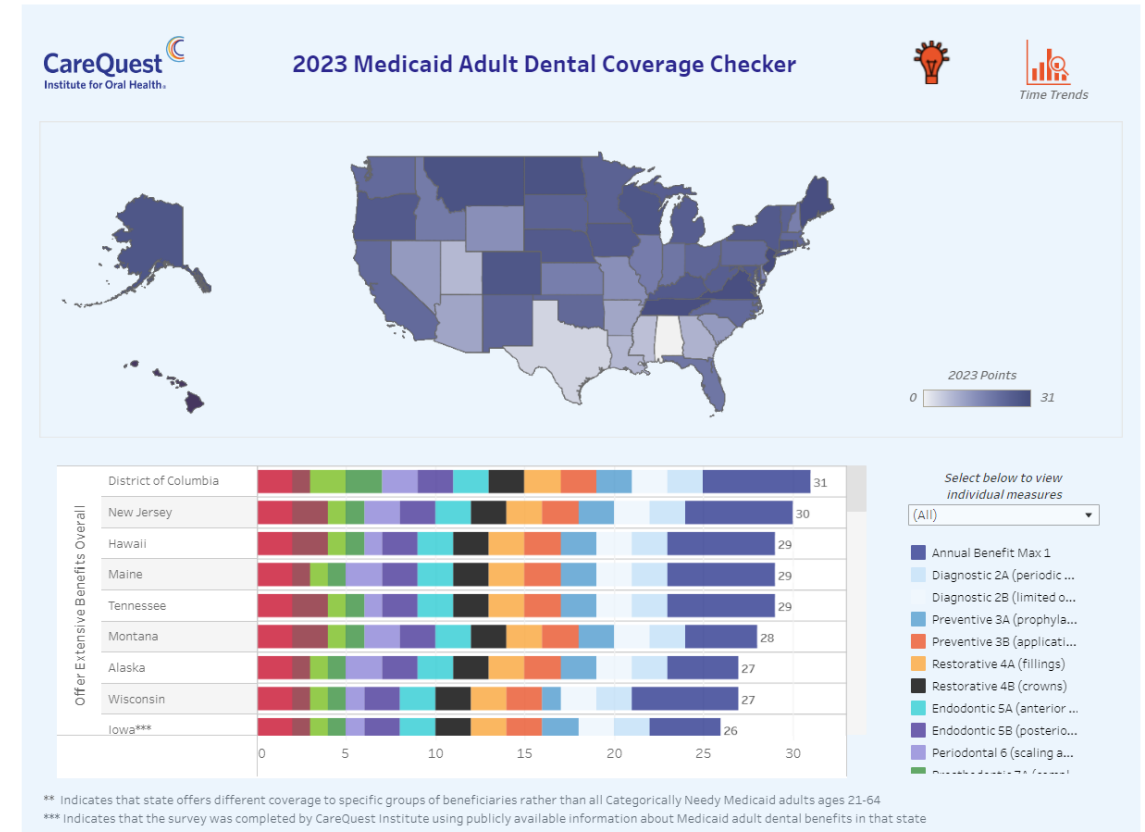
Be sure to explore the entire page for even more resources!



The Medicaid Adult Dental Coverage Checker

The Coverage Checker contains three sections:

- Map with responses by survey question
- Benefits continuum with points received by measure by state
- Time trends (2020, 2022, 2023)



Tutorial on using the Medicaid Adult Dental Coverage Checker

CareQuest
Institute for Oral Health.

2023 Medicaid Adult Dental Coverage Checker

The Medicaid Adult Dental Coverage Checker is an interactive tool for policymakers, administrators, and advocates to better understand where a given state's Medicaid adult dental benefits package falls on a continuum from no dental benefits to extensive benefits, helping to identify areas for improvement and expansion. It looks at coverage of specific procedures and services, including allowed frequency, in eight service categories. The Coverage Checker displays results that were self-reported by state Medicaid dental programs in a survey conducted in the spring of 2024.

The survey, known as the Rubric for Assessing Extensiveness of State Medicaid Adult Dental Benefits, was developed in partnership with the American Dental Association Health Policy Institute (ADA HPI), Center for Health Care Strategies (CHCS), CareQuest Institute, and an advisory committee of experts in oral health care and state policy.

The data below represent a snapshot in time and are reflective of the benefit package in place as of 12/31/2023.

[Click the Icon to View Full Survey](#)

Select below to view individual measures
(All)

- Annual Benefit Max 1
- Diagnostic 2A (periodic ...)
- Diagnostic 2B (limited o...
- Preventive 3A (prophyla...
- Preventive 3B (applicati...
- Restorative 4A (fillings)
- Restorative 4B (crowns)
- Endodontic 5A (anterior ..
- Endodontic 5B (posterior...
- Periodontal 6 (scaling a...
- Oral surgery 7A (extraction)

State	Score
District of Columbia	31
New Jersey	30
Hawaii	29
Maine	29
Tennessee	29
Montana	28
Alaska	27
Wisconsin	27
Iowa***	26

** Indicates that state offers different coverage to specific groups of beneficiaries rather than all Categorically Needy Medicaid adults ages 21-64
*** Indicates that the survey was completed by CareQuest Institute using publicly available information about Medicaid adult dental benefits in that state



Hover over the *Lightbulb* icon and the following informational 'Tool Tip' will pop up

Click on the *Lightbulb* icon and the 2023 Rubric survey and user guide will open

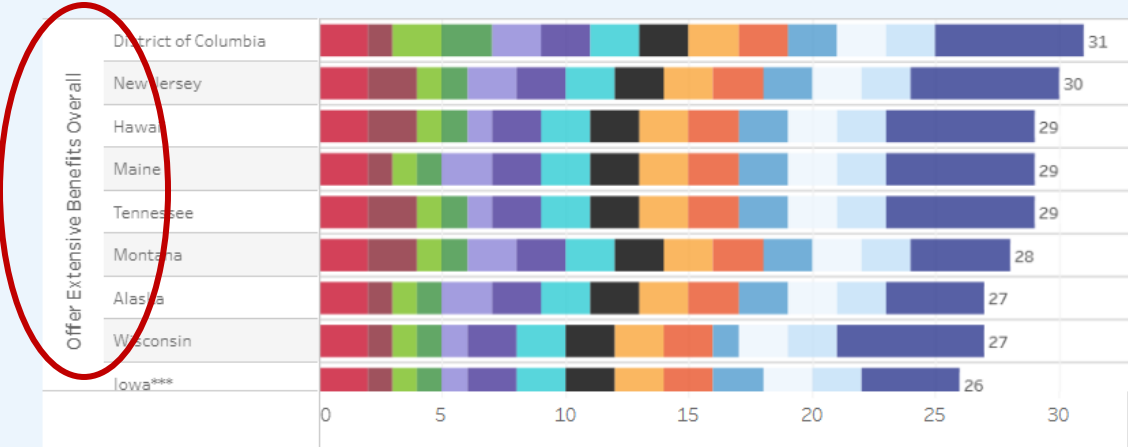
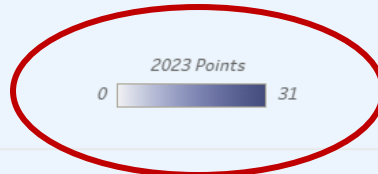
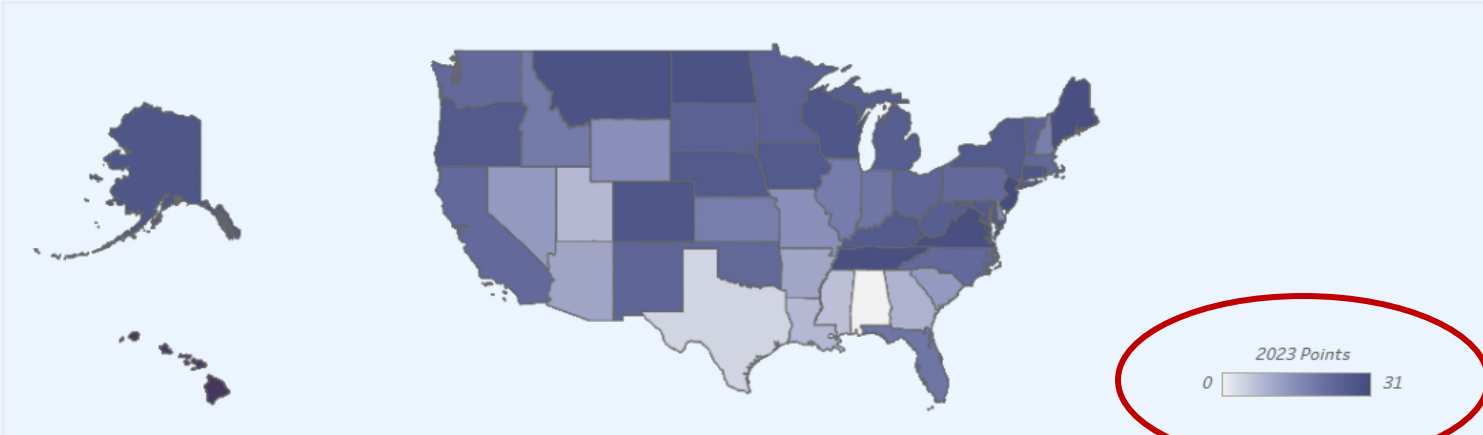


Time Trends

Click on the *Time Trends* icon and you will be taken to a new screen with data from 2020, 2022, and 2023

** Indicates that state offers different coverage to specific groups of beneficiaries rather than all Categorically Needy Medicaid adults ages 21-64.

*** Indicates that the survey was completed by CareQuest Institute using publicly available information about Medicaid adult dental benefits in that state.



Select below to view individual measures

(All)

- Annual Benefit Max 1
- Diagnostic 2A (periodic ...)
- Diagnostic 2B (limited o...)
- Preventive 3A (prophyla...)
- Preventive 3B (applicati...)
- Restorative 4A (fillings)
- Restorative 4B (crowns)
- Endodontic 5A (anterior ...)
- Endodontic 5B (posterior...)
- Periodontal 6 (scaling a...)
- Prosthodontic 7A (crowns)

** Indicates that state offers different coverage to specific groups of beneficiaries rather than all Categorically Needy Medicaid adults ages 21-64

*** Indicates that the survey was completed by CareQuest Institute using publicly available information about Medicaid adult dental benefits in that state

Section One:

Map with responses by survey question

- This is the initial screen you will see when you visit the Coverage Checker.
- Use the drop-down menu on the right side of the screen to click on a specific survey question/measure. The map will change to reflect that specific question/measure.

Please note: A state's Medicaid adult dental benefits program is considered 'Extensive' if it receives a total of 19 points or greater, does not receive a '0' in any question/measure, and receives a '4' or '6' in Question 1 (Annual Benefit Max).



State	Points Received in 2023
Vermont	2
Virginia**	2
Washington**	2
West Virginia	2
Arizona**	1
Kansas	1
Alabama ** ***	0
Arkansas***	0
Delaware	0

Select below to view individual measures

Endodontic 5A (anterior ro... ▼

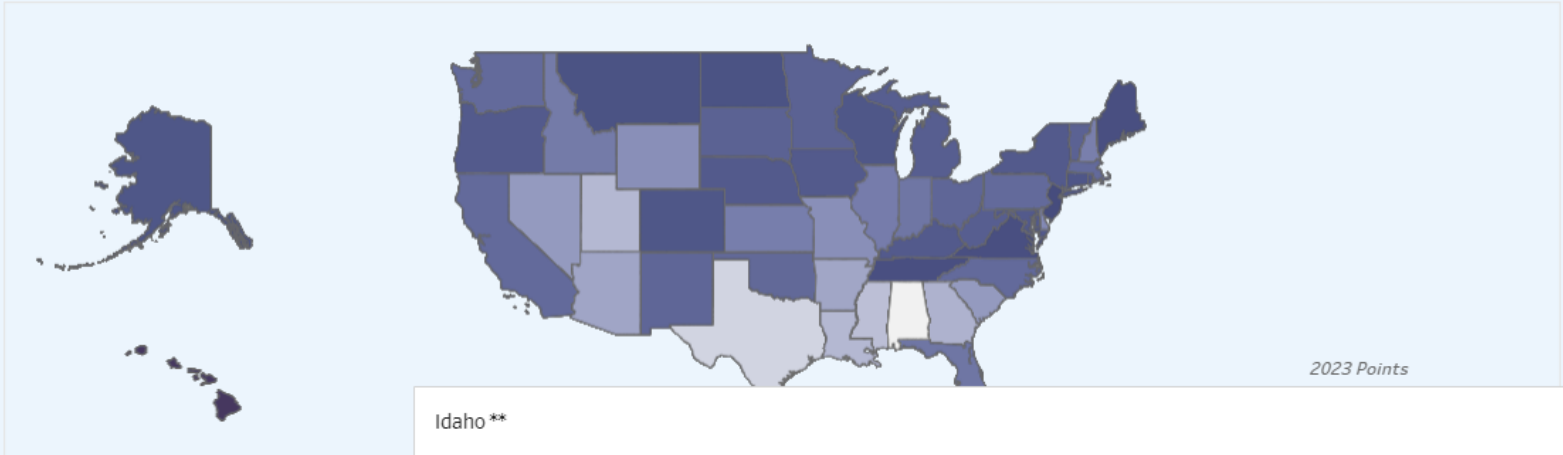
Endodontic 5A (anterior roo...

** Indicates that state offers different coverage to specific groups of beneficiaries rather than all Categorically Needy Medicaid adults ages 21-64
 *** Indicates that the survey was completed by CareQuest Institute using publicly available information about Medicaid adult dental benefits in that state

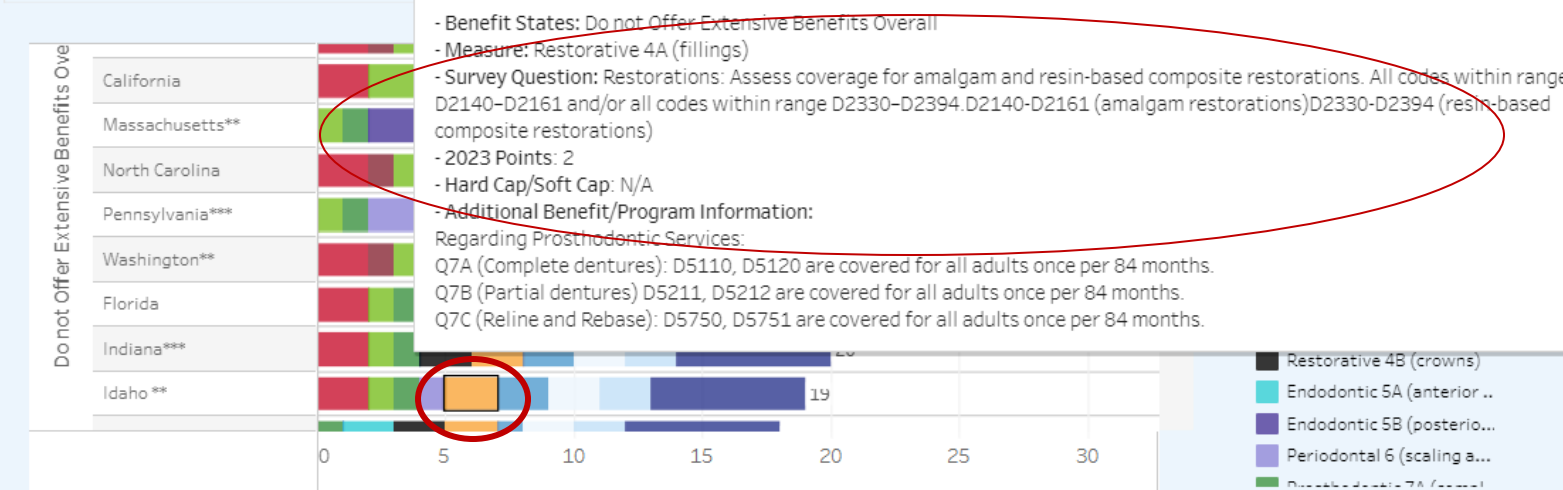
Section One:

Map with responses by survey question (*cont'd*)

- Use the drop-down menu on the right side of the screen to click on a specific survey question/measure. The map will change to reflect that specific question/measure.
- Hover over any state on the map to see the total points they received in that measure in 2023.
- The *2023 Points* bar indicates the maximum number of points a state can receive in this specific question/measure.
- You can also view state responses to the question/measure by using the scroll bar in the continuum section.



2023 Points



** Indicates that state offers different coverage to specific groups of beneficiaries rather than all Categorically Needy Medicaid adults ages 21-64
 *** Indicates that the survey was completed by CareQuest Institute using publicly available information about Medicaid adult dental benefits in that state

Section Two:

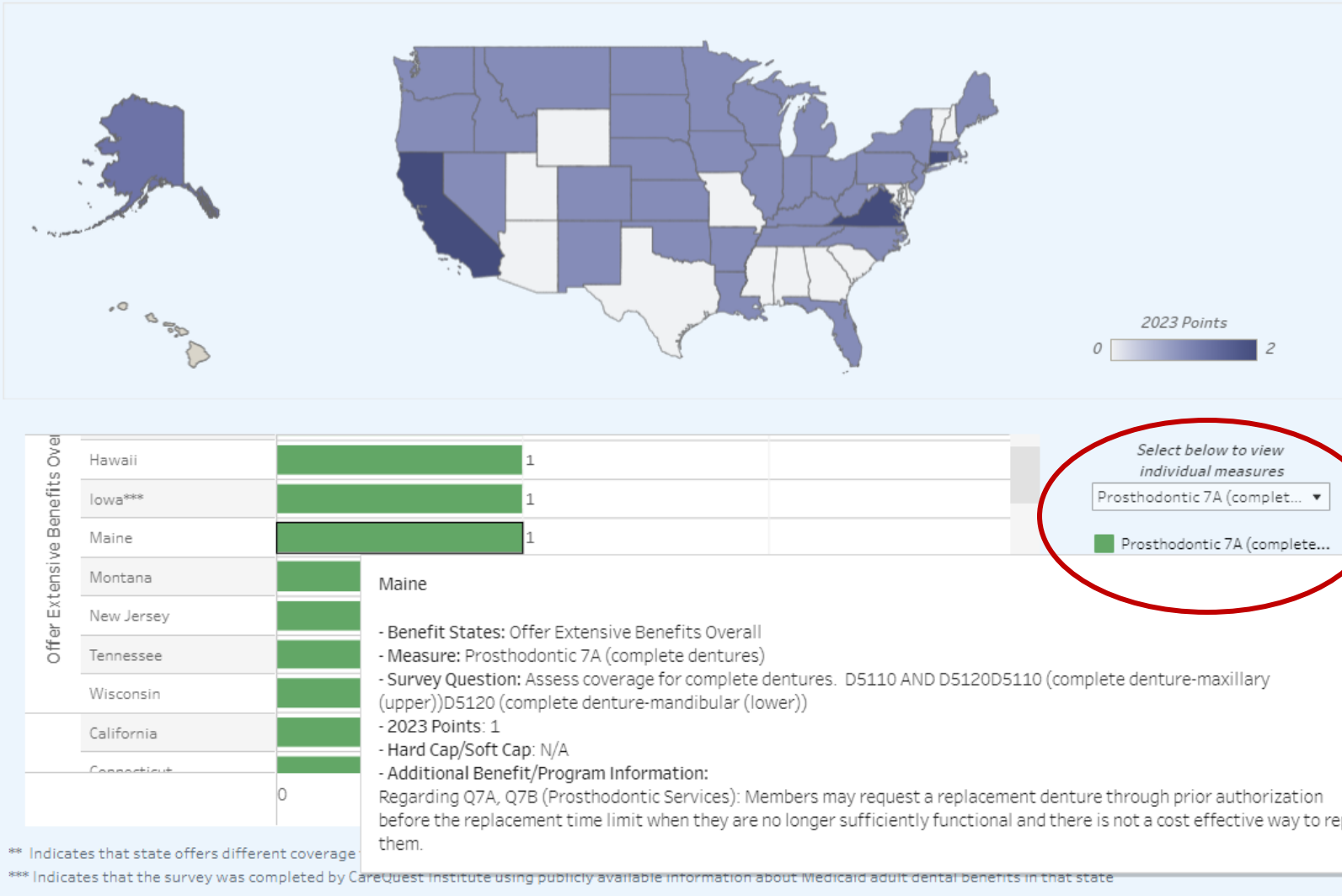
Benefits continuum

- Displays benefits on a continuum from extensive to no benefits.
- As you scroll down you will see that there is a section that identifies states that offer extensive benefits overall and states that do not offer extensive benefits overall.
- Hover over any of the color bars to see a state's response to that specific question/measure.
- If a state provided additional information about their state's adult dental benefit, it has been provided in the tool tip under *Additional Benefit/Program Information*.
- Use the drop-down menu to click on the specific survey question/measure. The continuum will change to reflect that specific question/measure (see next slide).



Section Two:

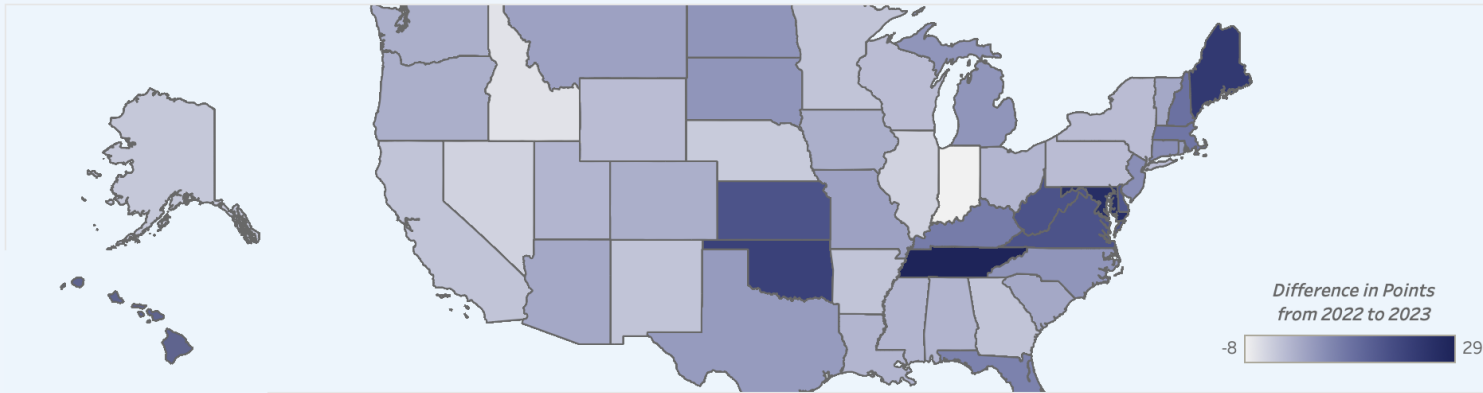
Benefits continuum (cont'd)



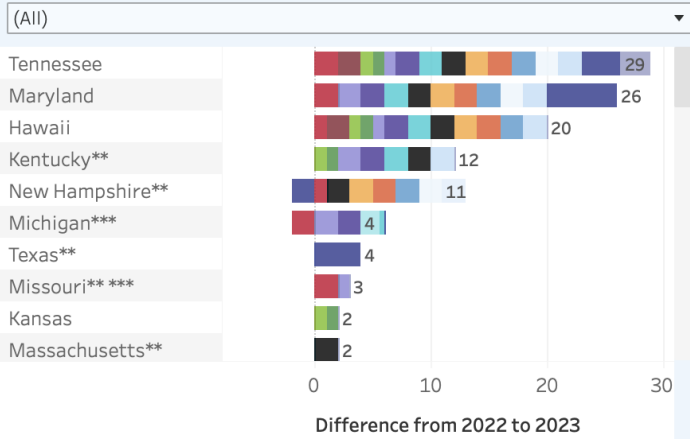
** Indicates that state offers different coverage

*** Indicates that the survey was completed by CareQuest Institute using publicly available information about Medicaid adult dental benefits in that state

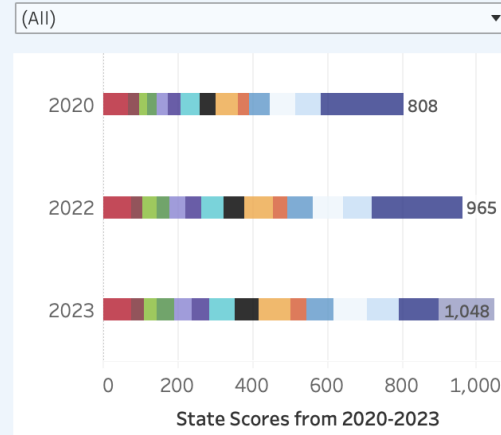
- Use the drop-down menu on the right side of the screen to click on a specific survey question/measure. The continuum will change to reflect that specific question/measure.
- Hover over any state to see the total points they received in that measure in 2023.
- You can also view state responses to the question/measure by hovering over the state in the map above.



Select below to view individual measures



Select below to view individual state responses




- Annual Benefit Ma:
- Diagnostic 2A
- Diagnostic 2B
- Preventive 3A
- Preventive 3B
- Restorative 4A
- Restorative 4B
- Endodontic 5A
- Endodontic 5B
- Periodontal 6
- Prosthodontic 7A
- Prosthodontic 7B
- Prosthodontic 7C

** Indicates that state offers different coverage to specific groups of beneficiaries than all Categorically Needy Medicaid adults ages 21-64
*** Indicates that the survey was completed by CareQuest Institute using publicly available information about Medicaid adult dental benefits in that state

Section Three:

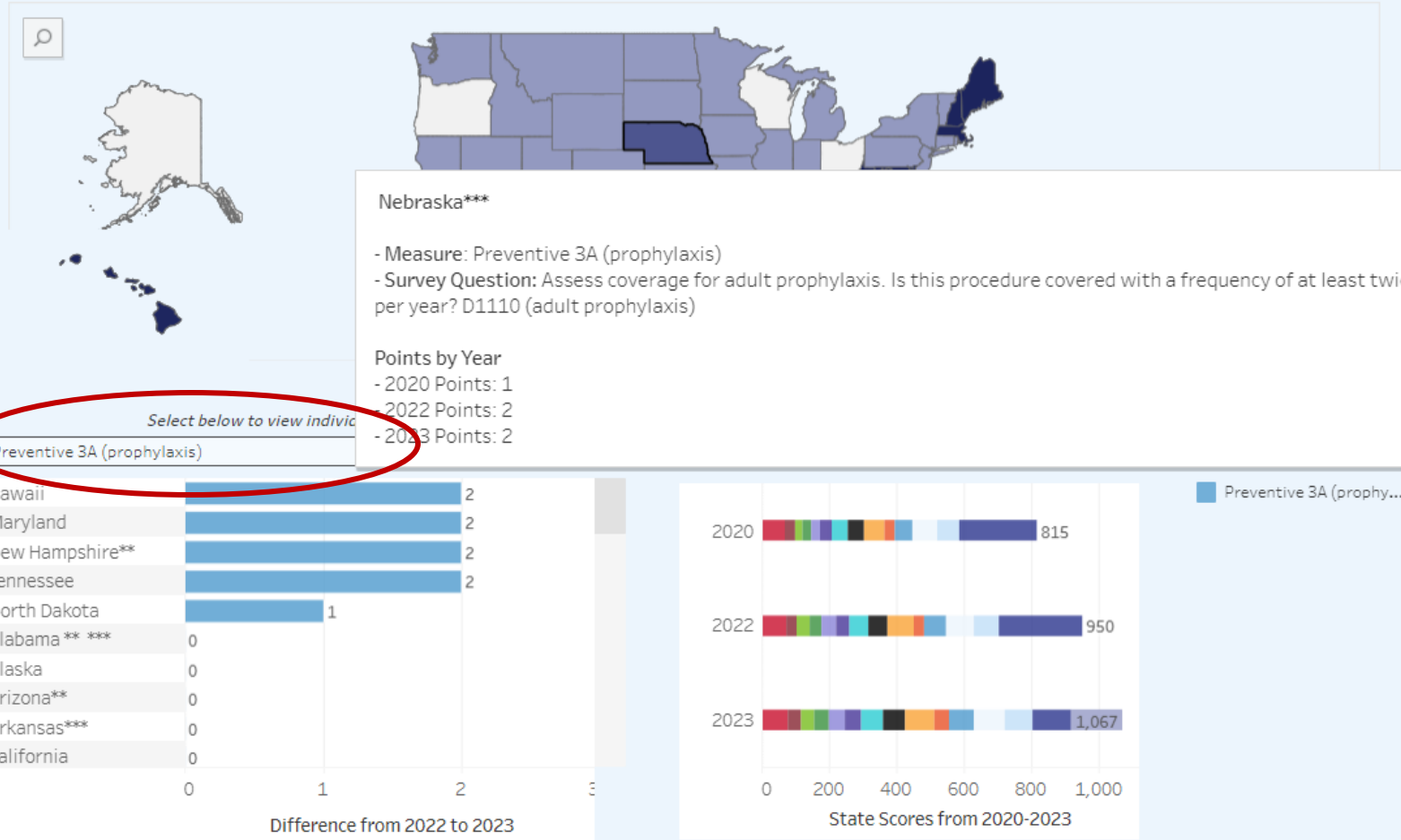
Time Trends

- This is the initial screen you will see when you click on the *Time Trends* icon. 
- Hover over any state on the map to see the total points they received in 2020, 2022, and 2023 (see next slide).
- Use the drop-down box in the *View Individual Measures* feature in the lower left of the screen and hover over the map to see the total points a state received for that question/measure in 2020, 2022, and 2023 (see next slide).
- Use the drop-down box in the *View Individual State Responses* feature in the lower right of to see how a state's point totals have changed between 2020, 2022, and 2023 (see slide 14).



Section Three:

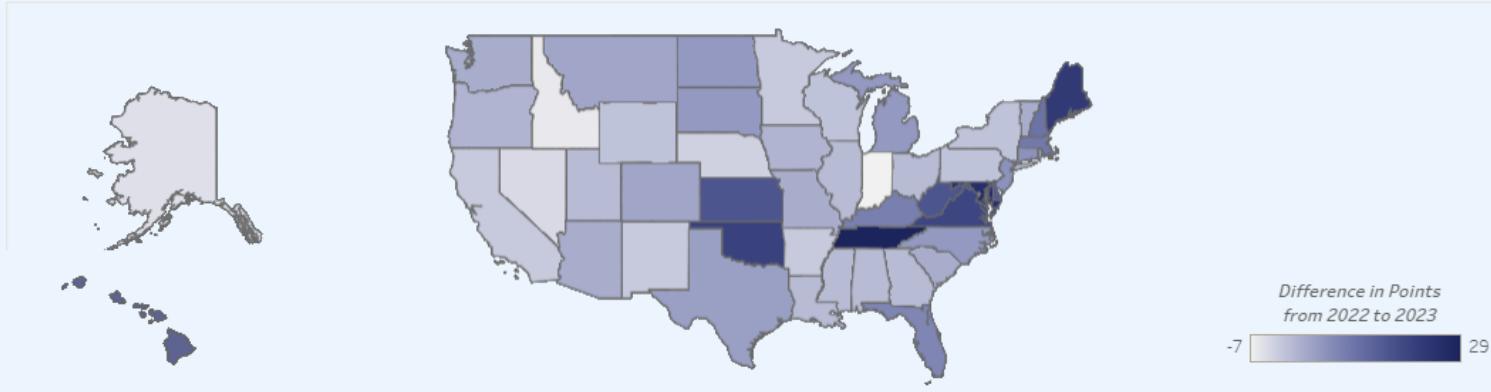
Time Trends (cont'd)



** Indicates that state offers different coverage to specific groups of beneficiaries rather than all Categorically Needy Medicaid adults ages 21-64

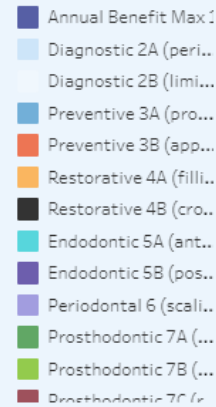
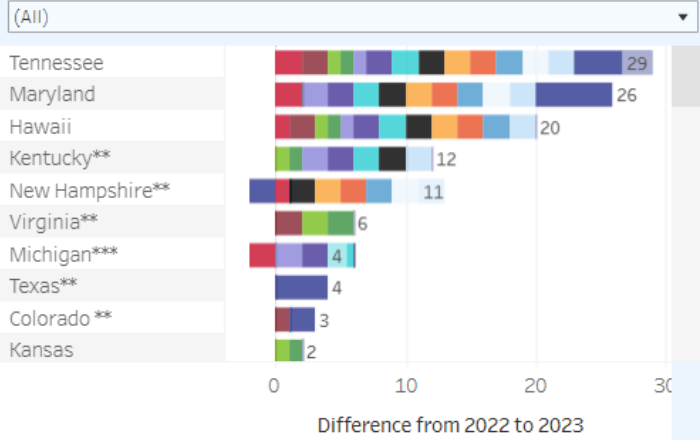
*** Indicates that the survey was completed by CareQuest Institute using publicly available information about Medicaid adult dental benefits in that state

- Hover over any state on the map to see the total points they received in that question/measure in 2020, 2022, and 2023.
- Use the drop-down box in the *View Individual Measures* feature to select a specific question/measure.
- Use the scroll down bar in the *View Individual Measures* feature to see how state responses to a specific question/measure have changed from 2022 to 2023.



Select below to view individual measures

Select below to view individual state responses



** Indicates that state offers different coverage to specific groups of beneficiaries rather than all Categorically Needy Medicaid adults ages 21-64
*** Indicates that the survey was completed by CareQuest Institute using publicly available information about Medicaid adult dental benefits in that state

Section Three:

Time Trends (*cont'd*)

- Use the drop-down box in the *View Individual State Responses* feature to see how a state's point totals have changed between 2020, 2022, and 2023.
- Hover over any of the color bars to see a state's response to that specific question/measure in that year.

Additional Resources

Medicaid Adult Dental Benefits Are On the Move in 2024

Medicaid Adult Dental Benefits Offered to Specific Beneficiary Groups as of December 2022 ***New 2023 Report Coming Soon!***

Medicaid Adult Dental Benefits: A Progress Report and a Look to the Future

'More People Have Access to Oral Health Services': How West Virginia Is Using the Medicaid Adult Dental Coverage Checker

Dr. Donna Balaski on Strengthening Medicaid Adult Dental Benefits

Medicaid Adult Dental Benefits Are on the Move in 2024
July 16, 2024
By Stacy Auger, MPH, policy consultant, CareQuest Institute

Oral health has been in the national spotlight recently thanks to a May 16 hearing of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pension (HELP). The [topic of the hearing was the dental cap](#) being the US and how to make dental care more affordable and available to all.

State policymakers and advocates are also recognizing the crisis our country is facing — and they are not waiting for federal action to make change. As we explore below, Medicaid adult dental coverage has continued to gain traction, as the number of states that are expanding adult dental benefits continues to grow. For anyone newer to the topic of Medicaid dental coverage, states are required to provide comprehensive dental benefits for children covered by Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

For adult Medicaid beneficiaries, however, dental coverage is optional, and states can limit the type or number of services and beneficiary groups they will cover. States can also exclude adult dental services entirely. As a result, there is wide variation in Medicaid adult dental benefits across states — even across beneficiary groups within some states. This landscape changes every year as states add or reduce their coverage offerings.

At CareQuest Institute, we are pleased to release the [2023 Medicaid Adult Dental Coverage Checker](#), an interactive tool that allows policymakers, administrators, and advocates to understand where a state's Medicaid adult dental benefits package lies compared to other states, including any exclusions to self-identify areas for improvement and expansion, while there's still time to act.

The Coverage Checker includes data self-reported by state Medicaid dental program administrators, as well as data from the Association Health Policy Institute (AHP), the Center for Health Care Statistics, and national leaders.

Medicaid Adult Dental Benefits Offered to Specific Beneficiary Groups as of December 2022

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.

While many states offer dental benefits to all adult Medicaid beneficiaries aged 19-64, some states provide coverage or expanded coverage only to specific beneficiary groups such as pregnant and postpartum adults within the age group in other states, additional benefits are provided to specific beneficiary groups such as more frequent preventative treatments for adults who are medically or developmentally disabled.

Additionally, some states offer coverage to adults who are blind (blindness and deaf-blind), those experiencing homelessness and substance use disorder or mental health conditions (SAMHSA), former foster youth (FosterCare), and adults who are dually eligible for Medicaid and Medicare (Medicare).

Medicaid Adult Dental Benefits: A Progress Report and a Look to the Future
October 16, 2023
By Stacy Auger, MPH, policy consultant, CareQuest Institute

In July, CareQuest Institute and a group of partners and advisors released the [2022 Medicaid Adult Dental Coverage Checker](#). This updated interactive tool allows policymakers, administrators, and advocates to understand where a state's Medicaid adult dental benefits

'More People Have Access to Oral Health Services': How West Virginia Is Using the Medicaid Adult Dental Coverage Checker
January 17, 2023

Jason Roush, DDS, realized early on in his career the importance of improving the oral health of all West Virginians. He started as a private practice dentist after graduating from the West Virginia University School of Dentistry in 1998, but he quickly started to look beyond the four walls of his office.

"I thought [could have a bigger impact working in the state government in the [West Virginia Oral Health Program](#) than what I could in the private sector," Roush says.

Twelve years later, in 2010, he became West Virginia's first full-time state dental director. He's been in that position ever since.

"I'm blessed to work with passionate individuals that want to improve the health and well-being of the citizens of West Virginia," he says.

During that tenure, one of the bigger challenges he has faced is how to strengthen dental benefits for adults on Medicaid. The state only provided coverage for emergency procedures.

That reality was reflected in 2020 when West Virginia appeared on the [Medicaid Adult Dental Coverage Checker](#), an interactive tool that shows where a state's Medicaid adult dental benefits package lies compared to other states. It looks at coverage of specific procedures and services, including allowed frequency, or eight service categories.

"The Coverage Checker allows states to see where their benefits package falls on a continuum from no benefits up to extensive," says Stacy Auger, MPH, a policy consultant at CareQuest Institute. "In doing so, it allows them to identify areas for improvement and expansion."

Moving to the Medicaid Adult Dental Coverage Checker

For many years, policymakers and advocates have relied on the classification system of the American Dental Association (ADA) for state Medicaid adult dental benefits. Adopted and adapted by other organizations, this system classifies Medicaid adult dental benefits into four categories: extensive, limited, emergency, and none. Using the ADA's classification system, a state's dental benefits package may be considered extensive but can include services that the rest among those that the best evidence shows are necessary to maintain oral health.

"CareQuest Institute convened a workinggroup that quickly decided the oral health community would benefit from a new assessment tool."

Voices from the Field: Dr. Donna Balaski on Strengthening Connecticut Medicaid Adult Dental Benefits
January 20, 2023

Since 2010, Donna Balaski, DMD, has voiced the importance of periodontal coverage for adults on Medicaid in Connecticut.

"By failing to treat periodontal disease," she says, "it is like allowing an infection in a person's lower limb to progress to gangrene where the ultimate treatment is amputation."

Balaski hopes her analogy — and her research-backed words of advocacy — will soon reach the ears of state leaders and lawmakers, inspiring them to strengthen Medicaid adult dental benefits in Connecticut. She knows the far-reaching effects benefits can have on access, equity, and the health of individuals in every corner of the state.

"What you should do in terms of population health and programs that address population health is more important than what code you cover," she says.

Balaski, a manager of medical care administration for the Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS), knew she wanted to be a dentist when she was 5. In fact, she wrote about it in her "what I want to be when I grow up" essay in fifth grade, when most girls wanted to be a nurse or teacher. She achieved that goal and has been in the DSS for nearly 20 years, including a tenure as the executive director of the Board of Education and Services for the Blind.

She's no stranger to advocacy tools and points to the [Medicaid Adult Dental Coverage Checker](#), an interactive tool that shows where a state's Medicaid adult dental benefits package lies compared to other states, as a valuable one. When she first explored it last summer, she noticed Connecticut offers coverage for extractions, fluoride treatments, and more for adult Medicaid members — but not periodontal.

Why is that coverage crucial? And what headway have advocates in the state made?

What brought you to the Department of Social Services in Connecticut?

I came to the Department of Social Services in 2004 to help settle a class action lawsuit against the state for the lack of access to dental care. I was charged with designing a program that was less administratively burdensome and improved utilization of dental services.

'More People Have Access to Oral Health Services': How West Virginia Is Using the Medicaid Adult Dental Coverage Checker
January 17, 2023

Jason Roush, DDS, realized early on in his career the importance of improving the oral health of all West Virginians. He started as a private practice dentist after graduating from the West Virginia University School of Dentistry in 1998, but he quickly started to look beyond the four walls of his office.

"I thought [could have a bigger impact working in the state government in the [West Virginia Oral Health Program](#) than what I could in the private sector," Roush says.

Twelve years later, in 2010, he became West Virginia's first full-time state dental director. He's been in that position ever since.

"I'm blessed to work with passionate individuals that want to improve the health and well-being of the citizens of West Virginia," he says.

During that tenure, one of the bigger challenges he has faced is how to strengthen dental benefits for adults on Medicaid. The state only provided coverage for emergency procedures.

That reality was reflected in 2020 when West Virginia appeared on the [Medicaid Adult Dental Coverage Checker](#), an interactive tool that shows where a state's Medicaid adult dental benefits package lies compared to other states. It looks at coverage of specific procedures and services, including allowed frequency, or eight service categories.

"The Coverage Checker allows states to see where their benefits package falls on a continuum from no benefits up to extensive," says Stacy Auger, MPH, a policy consultant at CareQuest Institute. "In doing so, it allows them to identify areas for improvement and expansion."

Moving to the Medicaid Adult Dental Coverage Checker

For many years, policymakers and advocates have relied on the classification system of the American Dental Association (ADA) for state Medicaid adult dental benefits. Adopted and adapted by other organizations, this system classifies Medicaid adult dental benefits into four categories: extensive, limited, emergency, and none. Using the ADA's classification system, a state's dental benefits package may be considered extensive but can include services that the rest among those that the best evidence shows are necessary to maintain oral health.

"CareQuest Institute convened a workinggroup that quickly decided the oral health community would benefit from a new assessment tool."

For questions or more
information, please contact:

Stacey Auger, MPH

Policy Consultant

CareQuest Institute for Oral Health

staceytaylorauger@gmail.com