The current reality of children’s oral health in Maine

**Challenges:**

- Almost half of kids in Maine are not getting regular preventive dental care
- Workforce shortages are impacting access
- The economics of providing dental care, especially in rural areas and for MaineCare and uninsured families, are very challenging - even non-profit dental centers must fill revenue shortfalls with grants in order to keep their doors open
- COVID has exacerbated pre-existing access challenges by decreasing provider capacity, increasing provider costs, changing home-care routines, and delaying preventive care

**2020 data demonstrates increasing access challenges and growing disparities**

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**Figure 6. Percentage of Children Under Age 21 with at least one Preventive Dental Claim in 2016-2020**

Source: Dental claims data from the Maine Health Data Organization’s All-Payer Claims Database
Note: percentages reflect the rates among children with consistent coverage (i.e. 11+ months of either MaineCare or commercial dental insurance in 2019)

Full data brief: [https://www.mainecohn.org/assets/docs/2020-COHN-Data-Brief.pdf](https://www.mainecohn.org/assets/docs/2020-COHN-Data-Brief.pdf)
The current reality of children’s oral health in Maine

**Figure 1. Maine Children Under Age 21 by Type of Dental Coverage**

Total Population aged 0-20 in 2020: 294,901

- **21%** No Coverage
- **21%** Intermittent Coverage
- **34%** Consistent MaineCare
- **24%** Consistent Commercial

Source: 2020 dental claims data from the Maine Health Data Organization's All-Payer Claims Database. Population denominators from Maine Department of Health and Human Services, Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Data, Research, and Vital Statistics.

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Preventive claims by age and by county

**Figure 3. Percentage of Children that Received Any Preventive Dental Care by Age Group**

- MaineCare: 35%, 43%, 46%, 36%, 20%
- Commercial: 37%, 57%, 68%, 62%, 47%

Source: 2020 dental claims data from the Maine Health Data Organization's All-Payer Claims Database

**Figure 4. Disparities in Preventive Dental Care by County for Children Under Age 21**

- MaineCare: 60%
- Commercial Dental: 40%
It’s not all about access to dental care

Macro-level environmental factors
(i.e. oral health system design, access to healthy food, structural racism, and other inequities)

Community & social/cultural factors
(i.e. fluoridated water, access to care, educational opportunity)

Immediate/interpersonal factors
(i.e. family, bacterial exposure, poverty, stress)

Individual factors (genetics, behaviors, personal beliefs & preferences)

https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2147600/
It’s not all bad news!

**Opportunities:**
- Big changes coming for MaineCare starting July 1, 2022
  - Comprehensive adult benefit
  - New dental rates
- LD 1501 passed (2021) and funded (2022)!
  - Restores State Oral Health Coordinator position within Maine CDC
  - Requires expansion of School Oral Health Program to all public schools statewide over next 5 years
  - Adds children’s oral health and methods to maximize Medicaid resources to MaineCare’s annual report to HHS Committee
- Board of Dental Practice
  - New licensing authority for dental therapists in 2021
  - Rules coming for Teledentistry in 2022

**A status update on the dental workforce**

- Dentists*
  - General dentists
  - Pediatric dentists
  - Specialists (oral surgeons, orthodontists)
- Dental hygienists*
  - RDHs
  - Independent Practice Dental Hygienists (and Public Health Status (“PHS”) Hygienists)
  - Dental Therapists
- Other allied personnel*
  - Dental Assistants
  - Community Health Workers
  - Community Dental Health Coordinators

*All are in short supply!*
Network Initiatives
Collaborative work by many partners
- Action teams
- Innovation Projects
- Advocacy for Systems Changes

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Cohn Backbone Support
- 501c3 organization (2 Staff and Board)
- Network Steering Committee
- Consultants and contractors provide capacity support on data, policy, communications, fundraising etc.
- Core operational funding from the Sadie and Harry Davis Foundation

Shared Vision
All children in Maine can grow up free from preventable dental disease

Collective Action
Transform Maine into a state where we
1. meet the oral health needs of all children and families,
2. prioritize prevention, and
3. address oral health as a key element of overall health and economic well-being.

Oral Health Integration Models for Primary Care and Dental Practices
Blend Models to Meet the Needs of Your Community

1. From the First Tooth
2. Co-located / Embedded Dental Hygienist
3. Integrated Dental Hygienist
4. Virtual Dental Home

Increased:
- Access to Care
- Comprehensive Care
- Coordinated Care
- Early Prevention of Disease
- Patient Satisfaction

Improved Health Outcomes

April 2022