

# DESTINATION: INCLUDE AN ADULT DENTAL BENEFIT IN PUBLICLY FUNDED HEALTH COVERAGE

**TARGET ONE** 



The Oral Health Progress and Equity Network (OPEN) is building power in states and communities to create the change needed to make our nation as healthy as it can be. We know that healthier mouths mean healthier people. And healthier people mean stronger communities. This DESTINATION is one of five on which OPEN is working collectively to achieve by 2020, in order to create a just oral health system — one where everyone has an equitable chance to thrive.

Target One: Medicare includes extensive dental coverage.

#### **COMMUNITY TACTICS**

- Demonstrate the impact of lack of dental coverage by working with community partners to develop and disseminate illustrative stories.
- Conduct public education to make people aware that Medicare lacks dental coverage.
- Support and train community health workers to provide oral health education in senior centers and other senior facilities.
- ☐ Engage Area Agencies on Aging.
- Engage older adults and caregivers and train them as advocates.

#### STATE TACTICS

 Increase the number of state oral health coalitions with Medicare dental coverage as a goal.

#### NATIONAL TACTICS

- Define and build consensus on definition of extensive dental coverage in Medicare.
- Develop consistent national message on importance of Medicare and how dental coverage would affect Medicare beneficiaries, especially those who are low-income, of color, or in rural areas. Create strategic plan for delivering message.
- Build partnerships with national organizations that have position, clout, and influence to support consideration and passage of a bill.
- Engage national partner to conduct Congressional Budget Office scoring of benefit and bill.
- Support drafting of legislation and supporting materials by national partners, including those representing people of color or equityfocused groups.
- Monitor progress on passage of any relevant bill and act in a concerted way (e.g., sign-on letter) through decision points.

National tactics cont.

- Engage the AARP and the National Council on Aging.
- Disseminate effective models of care for older adults, including the ACL/ OWH database of programs.

### TACTICS THAT WORK ACROSS ALL LEVELS

- Undertake advocacy strategies to reflect that oral health care is federally recognized as a component of primary care.
- Develop and disseminate resources and tools to support state and local advocates.
- **Mobilize state and local advocates** to engage administrative and legislative champions for appropriations.
- Collaborate with disability community in advocacy efforts.

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Check off the tactics you plan to use in getting OPEN to this goal. Work with your team, stakeholders and partners to design a pathway to action.





## DESTINATION: INCLUDE AN ADULT DENTAL BENEFIT IN PUBLICLY FUNDED HEALTH COVERAGE

**TARGET TWO** 



Target Two: At least 30 states have an extensive Medicaid adult dental benefit.

#### **COMMUNITY TACTICS**

- ☐ Unite with community public health advocacy groups to collaborate across health issues.
- Build awareness and utilization of benefits through education and navigation programs by creating and leveraging community partnerships.
- □ Develop and/or support use of a comprehensive set of advocacy resources for community champions, including strategies, training, and tools for fighting benefits rollback attempts and expanding benefits.
- Provide training to community health workers and promotoras to serve as advocates.
- Mobilize community members (e.g., photovoice projects, listening sessions, creative arts) to demonstrate impacts of lack of coverage and the benefits of having coverage.
- ☐ Highlight oral health concerns most salient to individuals with disabilities by engaging the disability community.
- Identify ongoing or new barriers to access.

#### STATE TACTICS

- Conduct assessments of state workforce capacity to provide services following coverage expansion.
- Develop and spread stories of states' expanding or maintaining Medicaid adult dental coverage (why and how) and lessons learned.
- Translate state lessons and ROI analyses into resources to support benefits expansion.
- Provide Medicaid reimbursement to community health workers who deliver oral health education.

#### NATIONAL TACTICS

- Convene state Medicaid and dental directors to build increased will and action on the value of the benefit.
- **Define an extensive benefit and survey** where states stand. In addition to "extensive," define "limited" and "emergency," with community input.
- Conduct ongoing monitoring and reporting of state action and consumer advocacy on expanding and defending coverage.
- Monitor implementation of expanded dental benefits and their impact on access to care (e.g., provider participation; service utilization; service navigation; access to transportation; appointment wait times and completion; language access; member enrollment and renewal).
- Conduct and disseminate financial ROI analyses of Medicaid adult dental coverage.
- Collect/disseminate stories and case studies of how states achieved and implemented benefits expansions and factors (e.g., adequate reimbursement rates) needed to improve access and care once benefits are in place.
- Evaluate access and utilization in different coverage scenarios, aligning with the Dental Quality Alliance's utilization measures.
- Collect data on Medicaid work requirements and their impact on access; oppose similar measures that may hinder the impact of a dental benefit.
- Provide training to states around expanding capacity to provide care.

## TACTICS THAT WORK ACROSS ALL LEVELS

- Build national, state, and community awareness about lack of coverage and access to care.
- Frame oral health as a social justice issue.

Tactics that work across all levels, cont.

- Develop consistent, linguistically and culturally appropriate resources in collaboration with community partners, to help consumers better understand coverage and costs.
- Provide guidance on use of advocacy tools.
- □ Create partnerships with local faithbased organizations and state/national faith-based associations.
- Advocate for full appropriation of Action for Dental Health Act.
- Encourage state Medicaid agencies to include consumers on advisory panels.

#### NOTES, IDEAS, AND PLANS

Check off the tactics you plan to use in getting OPEN to this goal. Work with your team, stakeholders and partners to design a pathway to action.

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