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SMILE, CALIFORNIA SPOTLIGHTS MEDI-CAL DENTAL
New Campaign Aims to Help Millions of Medi-Cal Members Use their Dental Benefit

SACRAMENTO (October 8, 2018) – Today, the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) launched *Smile, California*, a campaign to increase members use of Medi-Cal’s dental benefit. The Medi-Cal Dental Program covers routine, preventive and restorative care for more than 13.5 million members in California, but less than half of child members and only about 20 percent of adults use these services each year. *Smile, California* will educate eligible members about the free and low-cost services available to maintain a healthy smile and make it easier for members to access care.

Research conducted earlier this year with more than 2,600 parents of child members revealed that most parents (90 percent) know Medi-Cal includes dental coverage, but they are less certain of the types of available services and the fact that these services are free for children. While parents’ reasons for not using their child’s benefit varied, the most common reasons were lack of need, lack of information, and concerns about providers. Parents are aware that oral health is closely connected to overall health and are motivated by a desire for their children to be healthy. They are eager to take advantage of preventive services that guard against decay, like sealants and fluoride varnish.

“Smile, California was created to help members take full advantage of the services available to them,” said Alani Jackson, Chief of the Medi-Cal Dental Services Division within DHCS. “We want to remove any mystery around dental coverage, promote the benefits of regular dental visits, and at the same time grow the provider network so members can easily find the care they need and want.”

The centerpiece of the campaign is a new, mobile-enabled member website. At SmileCalifornia.org and SonrieCalifornia.org members can get the facts about the Medi-Cal Dental Program, learn about covered services and oral health needs at every age, and find a Medi-Cal dentist.

Smile, California will also connect with members through social media, direct mail, community events and by partnering with organizations across the state that also serve Medi-Cal members. New materials in multiple languages will be distributed through partners, county health departments, providers and by the *Smile, California* outreach team. As part of the launch, the campaign will tour the state to raise awareness and meet members one-on-one to discuss services and provide referrals.



Smile, California is part of an integrated member and provider outreach plan developed by the DHCS and Delta Dental, Medi-Cal Dental's administrative services contractor, to improve overall performance of the program. The campaign will help to meet the plan's annual objectives to increase dental visits among all members, increase the number of children receiving preventive services and molar sealants, increase the number of providers accepting Medi-Cal and Medi-Cal providers taking on new patients.

To match the increasing demand among members for dental services, *Smile, California* is also helping to expand the network of more than 10,000 dental providers and pursuing alternatives like mobile care and teledentistry to bring care to more communities in California.

"With one-third of Californians receiving dental care through Medi-Cal, greater member and provider participation will quickly add up to thousands of healthier smiles. This is a tremendous opportunity to have a positive impact on oral health status across California," said Jackson.

The *Smile, California* campaign fact sheet can be found [here](#). Additional information can be found at SmileCalifornia.org.

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About the California Department of Health Care Services

DHCS provides Californians with access to affordable, integrated, high-quality health care, including medical, dental, mental health, substance use treatment services and long-term care. Our vision is to preserve and improve the overall health and well-being of all Californians.