



# Reinstate Periodontal Services to Adult MassHealth

***Periodontal Services in Adult MassHealth May Save Money and Improve Health***

## ***Oral Health = Overall Health***

Poor oral health impacts overall quality of life. There are significant social and economic costs to poor oral health, with oral disease directly responsible for an estimated 164 million work hours lost each year in the US. ***Good oral health enhances Medicaid beneficiaries' ability to obtain and keep jobs.***

## ***Why Periodontal Services?***

Periodontal disease is a chronic bacterial infection of the gums and bone that surround teeth. When left untreated, this disease causes irreversible gum and bone loss leading to eventual tooth loss. According to the CDC, not only do half of Americans aged 30 or older suffer from periodontal disease, it is also the primary cause of tooth loss after age 35. Tooth loss weakens the remaining teeth and results in difficulty eating, speaking and interacting with others.

***Periodontal disease has serious systemic implications.*** Poor oral health, particularly periodontal disease, directly impacts chronic disease outcomes including those of diabetes, heart disease, stroke, lung disease, and rheumatoid arthritis. Periodontal disease can also lead to low birth weight and premature birth. Therefore, coverage for the treatment of periodontal disease is critical to improving the oral *and* general health of the adult population.

## ***Periodontal Services are Cost-Effective***

There is increasing evidence about the impact of dental services, particularly periodontal services, on overall health.

- Cigna estimates that every dollar spent on preventive dental care could save \$8 to \$50 in restorative and emergency treatments.
- According to UnitedHealthcare, even those who are noncompliant with medical care but who receive dental care realize significant savings on overall health care costs.
- United Concordia also found annual medical cost savings ranging from \$1,090 annually for members with coronary heart disease to \$5,681 annually for stroke patients that underwent periodontal treatment. Hospitalizations were also at least 21% lower among patients with chronic disease who underwent dental treatment versus patients with chronic disease without dental intervention.

## ***Reinstating Periodontal Benefits for MassHealth Adults is Worth It***

Given the stark evidence in support of the medical efficacy and cost-effectiveness of periodontal care, **we are asking for \$10,000,000 to reinstate coverage for periodontal treatment (dental procedure codes D4341 and D4342).**

Periodontal treatment can effectively remedy poor periodontal health. In fact, there is increasing evidence that ***periodontal treatments can actually lower overall health care expenditures.***

However, periodontal services are **NOT** covered by MassHealth.