

June 11, 2024

In July 2022 Missouri Medicaid (MO HealthNet) dental rates increased to 80% UCR, which puts most Medicaid dental rates on par with commercial rates. Some individual procedure codes exceed commercial rates. After successfully advocating for this rate increase, the Missouri Coalition for Oral Health (MCOH) partnered with the Missouri Dental Association (MDA) and MO HealthNet to increase access to care for all MO HealthNet participants through increased Dental Provider enrollment. A Dental Medicaid Facilitator position was established to assist dental providers and identify barriers that prevent dental providers from seeing Medicaid patients. Through this position, MCOH conducted webinars, wrote articles, and created resources to let providers know about the need for Medicaid dental providers and that Medicaid can now be viewed as a financially viable funding source. A media campaign was launched to share information and resources with dental providers across the state (support provided by Missouri Foundation for Health and Health Forward Foundation).

When the rate increase went into effect, 743 of Missouri's 3,000 dental providers were enrolled in Medicaid. In State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2023, 184 new dental providers enrolled to offer Medicaid services compared to 101 in SFY 2022 and 95 in SFY 2021. We now have over 1,000 dental providers enrolled in Medicaid. These additional providers were seen in 59 of Missouri's 114 counties. Because of the increased number of Dental Medicaid providers, 50,180 additional MO Medicaid participants were able to access dental care in SFY2023 compared to SFY2022.

In January 2023, 36 of Missouri's 114 counties did not have a dental Medicaid provider available. As of January 2024, that number is down to 25 (11 of those counties have no dental provider).

Reporting is dependent on Missouri State data. Data for SFY2024 will not be available until late in 2024 at the earliest. However, there is a continuing interest by dental providers in accepting MO Medicaid. With higher reimbursement rates, dental providers now have more practice options. Several practices have expanded into rural areas. Some practices have opened additional locations due to the increased Medicaid rates.

The increase in Missouri Medicaid Dental rates is significant. The higher rates make MO Medicaid a business opportunity and providers are grateful for the increase. The collaboration between MCOH, MDA, and MHD has been essential and successful in increasing access to care.