



ORAL HEALTH KANSAS
ADVOCACY • PUBLIC AWARENESS • EDUCATION

2026 Medicaid Dental Rate Increase Talking Points

Legislative investments to date

- In 2022, the Legislature established restorative dental care for adults.
- In 2023, the Legislature added coverage dentures for adults.
- In 2024, preventive dental care for adults was added by the Legislature.
- In 2025, after the adult dental coverage was added, the Legislature allocated \$4 million for a dental rate increase to improve the dental provider network.
- **Only one step remains – finishing the rate increase** to ensure the rates are competitive with commercial insurance and our neighboring states' Medicaid programs.

2019-2020

Rate increases on preventive & diagnostic services as well as fillings

2023

Denture coverage added for adults

2025

Dental and Sedation Dentistry rate increases

2022

Dental coverage extended to adults: fillings, crowns, periodontal care, & Silver Diamine Fluoride

2024

Preventive dental coverage added for to adults: exams, x-rays, & cleanings

Results of the investments

- All people with Medicaid coverage – kids and adults – have nearly comprehensive dental coverage.
- One dentist saw the new rates in 2025 and told us she was, “pleasantly surprised” to see the new rates. She went on to say the new rates “look very promising.” She has since signed up as a Medicaid provider.
- Oral Health Kansas has set up a Medicaid Dental Facilitator program to provide administrative assistance and educational tools for dental offices to learn about Medicaid and how to become Medicaid providers.
- Pairing nearly comprehensive dental coverage and a rate increase with administrative assistance for providers is a winning combination. Our sister state of Missouri did this three years before Kansas and has grown their provider network by nearly 700 new providers and cut the number of counties with no Medicaid dental providers in half.
- Missouri's experience shows what is possible when rate increases and provider support are implemented together.

Changes in the Kansas Medicaid dental provider network

- The data shows that the rate increase is beginning to reverse years of provider loss:
 - Between 2021 and 2024, there was a 20% loss of dental providers enrolled in Medicaid (-172). In contrast, 2024 to 2025 saw an 8% gain (+55) in the number of dental providers enrolled in Medicaid.
 - Net gain of 30 dental providers enrolled in Medicaid from January 2025 through December 2025. The greatest net gain (66.6%) came after the rate increase was implemented in July.
 - 3 counties which registered 0 billing Medicaid dental providers in 2024 had a billing Medicaid dental provider in 2025- Jefferson, Osborne and Woodson, however, 40% of Kansas counties still do not have a Medicaid provider

Continued challenges for dental offices

- This gain in dental providers enrolled in Medicaid is the context of an economically challenging year for the US dental economy:
 - Dental office overhead costs (dental equipment and supplies and pay for dental office staff) increased faster than overall inflation- prices for dental equipment and supplies increased in September 2025 and are up 5% from the beginning of the year
 - Provider reimbursement rates are not keeping pace with overall inflation and certainly not with practice expenses
 - These trends are putting a significant “fiscal squeeze” on dental practices.
 - Dentists’ top concern is insurance – specifically low and delayed or denied reimbursement – with 30% of dentists planning to drop out of some insurance networks in 2026
 - The top 3 challenges facing dental practices for 2026 are cited as **insurance, overhead costs**, and staffing.
- After the 2025 rate increase, private practice dental offices told Oral Health Kansas it is a start, but more is needed:
 - “We love serving the Medicaid community, but we do lose money due to increased product cost and higher wages for our employees.”
 - “The reimbursements don’t cover our overhead expenses to run the practice. Increasing the rates is critical to increasing the number of providers.”
- **These pressures make participation in Medicaid increasingly difficult for small businesses, even for mission-driven practices.**

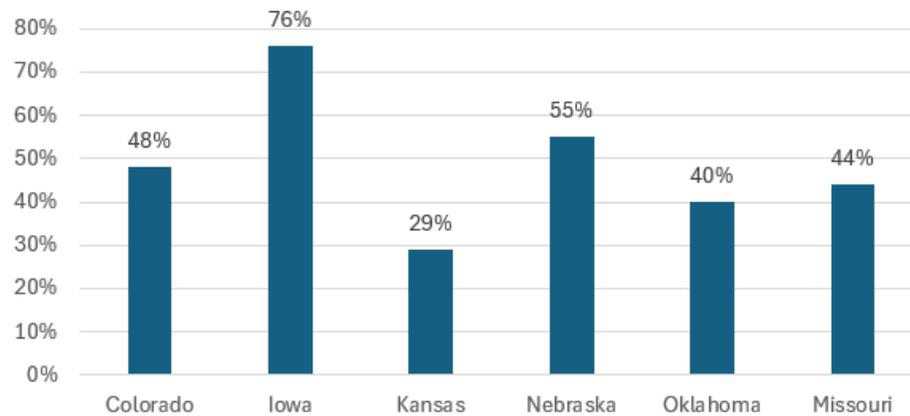
Support for providers

- Oral Health Kansas launched a Kansas Dental Medicaid Facilitator program in 2025.
- The recent success in Missouri demonstrates the effectiveness of combining a meaningful rate increase with administrative assistance for providers in growing the Medicaid dental provider network.
- **Oral Health Kansas and our partners are prepared to implement the rate increase by recruiting and supporting new Medicaid dental providers.**

How do the Medicaid dental rates compare?

- Kansas Medicaid dental rates are significantly lower than Medicaid dental rates in neighboring states, private dental insurance, and rates set by dental offices.
- The Medicaid dental rates in the neighboring states of Colorado and Missouri are as much as twice as high as Kansas Medicaid dental rates.
- The Kansas Medicaid dental provider network remains significantly smaller than our neighboring states.
- These discrepancies in rates directly affect dentists’ ability to say yes to Medicaid patients.

Percentage of Dentists Enrolled as a Medicaid Provider in 2024



Source: ADA Health Policy Institute, "The US Dentist Workforce"

Cost of finishing the Medicaid dental rate increase

- The cost to increase the Medicaid dental rates in Kansas is \$12 M SGF.
- The House of Representatives included \$6 M SGF in their budget, but the Senate did not include the funding.
- This incremental approach to funding the rate increase will help ensure we meet this tipping point and **make it easy for dental offices across Kansas say YES to Medicaid.**

For more information

- Visit Oral Health Kansas' webpage: <https://oralhealthkansas.org/MedicaidDentalRates.html>
- Contact Tanya Dorf Brunner at tdorf@oralhealthkansas.org or MaryAnne Lynch Small at mlynchsmall@oralhealthkansas.org