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## Bob Bethell Joint Committee on HCBS and KanCare Oversight Committee October 22, 2024

Chair Landwehr,

Thank you for the opportunity to share this testimony with the Committee. My name is Tanya Dorf Brunner, and I am the Executive Director of Oral Health Kansas, Inc. We are the statewide advocacy organization dedicated to promoting the importance of lifelong oral health by shaping policy and educating the public.

### Committee Follow Up

At the August 26 meeting, I shared our request that the Legislature invest in a rate increase to raise the level of Medicaid dental rates to the level of the Missouri Medicaid dental rates. Low Medicaid rates are one of the biggest reasons dental offices do not participate in Medicaid. Some of the state's FQHCs are so overwhelmed by demand for dental care that they have stopped accepting new patients. There is a capacity problem in the Medicaid dental program, and the safety net clinics cannot take on all the capacity alone. Addressing the rates to make Medicaid more appealing to private dental practices is key to creating more capacity.

Committee members asked several good questions about the Medicaid dental provider network and requested follow up information about the following:

1. The number of dentists who accept Medicaid in Kansas and the number of individuals they serve each year;
2. The percent of dentists in Missouri who accept Medicaid and any variation on rates paid based on region;
3. Kansas data on Medicaid beneficiary no-show for dentist appointments and for dental cleanings by hygienists; and
4. How to address no-shows. [This information was to be discussed at a Dental Provider Advisory Group being formed and provided to the Committee at a later date.]

I have responses to the first two questions, but responses for the second two will take a bit more time. I will explain that later in my testimony.

### 1. Number of dentists who accept Medicaid in Kansas and the number of individuals they serve each year

The ADA's Health Policy Institute published a report in 2021 that explored dentist participation in Medicaid programs across the country. The report noted, "the level of engagement of dentists with Medicaid patients varied drastically." They discussed the fact that some states have a "wide but shallow" pool of dentists who see small numbers of people with Medicaid coverage and other states with a "shallow but wide" pool of dentists who see larger numbers of Medicaid patients.<sup>1</sup>

There are 1,558 dentists in Kansas. Over the summer we requested data from the KDHE Division of Health Care Finance about the number of dentists who bill Medicaid and the volume of individuals they serve each year. The data is in the chart below. We added the final column that shows the percentage of total dentists in Kansas who are enrolled in Medicaid, see 1-9 patients per year, etc. We believe this column helps make it clear what Medicaid dental provider network is in the state.

<b>Total Dentists</b>	<b>CY 2021</b>	<b>CY 2022</b>	<b>CY2023</b>	<b>CY 2023 % of Total Dentists</b>
<b>Total number of BILLING dental providers enrolled in Medicaid</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>464</b>	<b>30%</b>

<b>Total billing Dentists</b>	<b>CY 2021</b>	<b>CY 2022</b>	<b>CY2023</b>	
<b>Total Number of billing Medicaid dental providers</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>414</b>	<b>27%</b>
Number of billing Medicaid dental providers who saw 1-9 patients	99	97	99	6%
Number of billing Medicaid dental providers who saw 10-99 patients	96	87	114	7%
Number of billing Medicaid dental providers who saw 100 or more patients	189	187	201	13%

<b>Total Number of billing Medicaid dental providers who saw Medicaid members over age 21</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>22%</b>
Number of billing Medicaid dental providers who saw 1-9 patients over age 21	148	143	160	10%
Number of billing Medicaid dental providers who saw 10-99 patients over age 21	102	85	116	7%
Number of billing Medicaid dental providers who saw 100 or more patients over age 21	45	58	59	4%

<b>FQHCs/FQHC Look Alikes, including Douglas County Dental Clinic and Rawlins County Dental Clinic</b>	<b>CY 2021</b>	<b>CY 2022</b>	<b>CY2023</b>
<b>Total Number of billing Medicaid dental providers</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>50</b>
Number of billing Medicaid dental providers who saw 1-9 patients	10	16	13
Number of billing Medicaid dental providers who saw 10-99 patients	10	8	9
Number of billing Medicaid dental providers who saw 100 or more patients	29	28	28

<b>Total Number of billing Medicaid dental providers who saw Medicaid members over age 21</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>47</b>
Number of billing Medicaid dental providers who saw 1-9 patients over age 21	11	15	12
Number of billing Medicaid dental providers who saw 10-99 patients over age 21	13	15	18
Number of billing Medicaid dental providers who saw 100 or more patients over age 21	21	18	17

Medicaid adult dental benefits went into effect in July 2022. The data shows that the number of dentists who treat adults jumped from 2022 to 2023 after the benefits went into effect. This jump was organic, because it was not accompanied by a concerted outreach effort to encourage dentists to accept Medicaid. We cannot attribute causation to this jump, but the correlation is interesting.

### Key takeaways from this data

- Only 30% of Kansas dentists are actively billing Medicaid.
- Only 13% of Kansas dentists treat 100 or more patients per year.
- While the safety net clinics see a large share of Medicaid patients, the dental provider network depends heavily on private practice providers.
- Improving dental benefits has a direct impact on improving the Medicaid provider network.

## 2. The percent of dentists in Missouri who accept Medicaid and any variation on rates paid based on region

In July 2022, the Medicaid dental rates in Missouri increased from 30% to 80% of usual and customary rates (UCR), which means they increased to the level of commercial dental insurance rates. This rate change, along with a concerted effort to do outreach to dental offices to encourage them to accept Medicaid, resulted in the state seeing the number of billing Medicaid providers jump.

We asked our counterpart, Missouri Coalition for Oral Health, about their Medicaid dental provider network. The percentage of dentists in the state who bill Medicaid jumped after the rate increase and the campaign to recruit more dentists to become Medicaid providers.

Total Dentists ~ 3,000	FY 2022	FY 2023
Number of billing Medicaid dental providers	743	927
% of dental providers who bill Medicaid	25%	31%

The Missouri Coalition for Oral Health also told us that there are no regional or other rate differences for providers in that state. The dental rates are the same across the state.

This month Oral Health Kansas was awarded a grant from the KDHE Division of Health Care Finance that will allow us to begin a campaign similar to the one in Missouri to increase the number of Medicaid dental providers. Through the new grant, Oral Health Kansas and our partners will develop a **Medicaid Dental Facilitator program**, modeled after a similar initiative in Missouri, to recruit and support Medicaid dental providers. The goal of the Medicaid Dental Facilitator program is to implement a statewide communications and marketing strategy to recruit, educate, and enroll additional dental providers in the KanCare program.

In addition to the media campaign, the new Medicaid Dental Facilitator program will conduct outreach to dental offices, assist with Medicaid provider enrollment and billing processes, and provide regular training and technical assistance to dental offices. Through this program we also will produce blogs for dental offices on subjects such as the impact of offering Medicaid dental services and how to make Medicaid a part of the office revenue stream.

According to the ADA's Health Policy Institute report from 2021, the number of Missouri dentists that bill Medicaid was below the number of Kansas dentists.<sup>1</sup> We are optimistic that pairing a rate increase in Kansas with the Dental Medicaid Facilitator outreach program will help our state further increase the number of Medicaid dental providers and keep us competitive with our neighboring state.

## Key takeaways from this data

- The percentage of Missouri dentists billing Medicaid jumped 6% after the rate increase.
- Pairing a rate increase with an outreach program to dental offices is a successful model.

### 3. Kansas data on Medicaid beneficiary no-show for dentist appointments and for dental cleanings by hygienists

This is an interesting question, and it certainly would be useful to know what the numbers are. We are not sure we can get this data from the agency because Medicaid tracks claims billed and missed appointments would not be billable. Our partners at the Kansas Dental Association have collected this type of information from their members in the past. We plan to work with them to try to ask dentists this information again. It would be useful to all of us to get a sense of how the no-show rate for people with Medicaid coverage compares to that of people with commercial insurance. We will follow up with you about this as we learn more. This may be something we also could address through the new Dental Provider Advisory Group we are forming. The goal is to learn about the challenges dentists and dental hygienists have in providing dental care for Medicaid members and work together on solutions.

### 4. How to address no-shows

As mentioned above, we are in the process of launching our new Dental Provider Advisory Group. We plan to make this one of the first questions we ask the group, and we will report back to the Committee about what we learn.

In 2022, we interviewed a Medicaid provider to ask him for advice about how to ask dentists to accept Medicaid. He shared a lot of insight about some of the questions dentists ask about the Medicaid population, including how to address no show rates. The advice he offered made it into an [FAQ we developed for dental providers](#):

***Is it true that people who are on Medicaid don't show up for dental appointments?***

*It is always possible for anyone to not show up for appointments, regardless of their insurance status. Dental offices can put rules in place such as limiting all patients to only two or three no shows. The rules must apply equally to all patients.*

*It is important to remember that adults who are on Medicaid have not had much access to dental care, so now that those services are covered it's likely they will show up. When people have been un-served for so long, they are going to want to show up to get the care they need.*

## Conclusion


We appreciate the Committee's thoughtful questions about the Medicaid dental provider network. It is improving, but capacity is still limited. We will continue to explore data, and we welcome other questions from the Committee.

Lack of Medicaid adult dental coverage contributed to dental offices' reluctance to see Medicaid patients, but that issue has been resolved for the most part through the Legislature's investment in dental coverage in the last few years. As we shared in August and at the Special Committee on Sedation Dentistry meeting, low reimbursement rates are the remaining issue for dental offices. It is time for Kansas' Medicaid dental rates to increase significantly. Raising the rates will even the playing field across the state border, encourage more private practices to see Medicaid patients, and result in more capacity in the Medicaid dental program. As we launch our new Medicaid Dental Facilitator program to conduct outreach and technical assistance to dental offices, we know that rates will be the other piece of the puzzle that will make a difference in dental offices seeing Medicaid members.

**Oral Health Kansas' request is for the Committee to recommend the 2025 Legislature increase the Medicaid dental rates to the level of the Missouri Medicaid dental rates.**

We appreciate the Committee's leadership in improving the dental program. Thank you for the opportunity to share this testimony. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,



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<sup>1</sup> ADA Health Policy Institute: "Dentist Participation in Medicaid: How Should It Be Measured? Does It Matter?," October 2021, [https://www.ada.org/-/media/project/ada-organization/ada/ada-org/files/resources/research/hpi/hpibrief\\_1021\\_1.pdf](https://www.ada.org/-/media/project/ada-organization/ada/ada-org/files/resources/research/hpi/hpibrief_1021_1.pdf)