

# Basic Preventive Dental Coverage in Kansas

## Why is basic preventive dental coverage important?

- Tooth decay and gum disease are nearly 100% preventable yet can cause severe pain, infection, and even be life threatening. Routine preventive care like a checkup, x-rays, and cleaning help prevent these diseases and catch disease early.
- When tooth decay and gum disease are not prevented or discovered and treated early, the cost of dental care becomes much higher.
- The way a person's teeth and mouth look, feel, and function can have a big impact on how others view them, how they perceive themselves, and their ability to work.<sup>1</sup>

## Why is it important to cover dental exams/x-rays/cleanings in Medicaid?

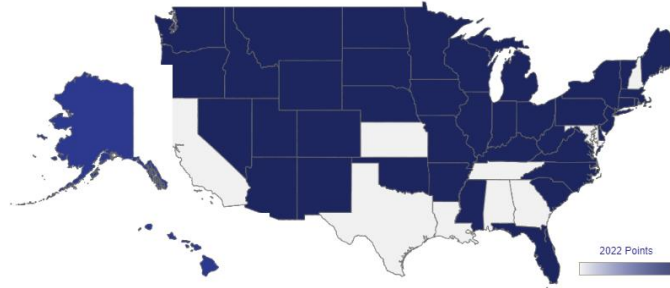
- Kansas is the only state that uses a combination of Medicaid and value-added benefits (VABs) for adult dental coverage.
- How the VABs are structured varies by managed care organization and changes from year to year, making the system difficult to navigate for dental providers
- When it is hard to understand how the most essential and basic dental care is covered, providers are reluctant to care for adults.

## Who would be affected if Medicaid included basic preventive dental care for adults in Kansas?

- 38% of the Kansas Medicaid population are adults over the age of 21.<sup>2</sup>
- 7551 Kansas adults received restorative dental care in 2023.
- The adult dental utilization rate in Kansas is around 4%.

## Do other states cover basic preventive dental care in Medicaid?

- Over 40 states, including all of our neighboring states, provide basic preventive dental coverage.
- The map below shows states that cover exams for adults.<sup>3</sup>



## Who supports including preventive dental care in the Kansas Medicaid program?

- A growing list of statewide and local organizations would like to see basic preventive dental care included in the Kansas Medicaid program. This includes disabilities service providers, older adult advocates and providers, behavioral health advocates, early childhood advocates, and dental clinics.



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<https://oralhealthkansas.org/BasicPreventiveAdvocacy.html>

<sup>1</sup> National Institute for Dental and Craniofacial Research "Oral Health in America: Advances and Challenges," 2021. <https://www.nidcr.nih.gov/sites/default/files/2021-12/Oral-Health-in-America-Advances-and-Challenges.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> KDHE Presentation to House Social Services Budget Committee, January 24, 2023, [http://kslegislature.org/li/b2023\\_24/committees/cte\\_h\\_soc\\_srvcs\\_bdgt\\_1/misc\\_documents/download\\_testimony/cte\\_h\\_soc\\_srvcs\\_bdgt\\_1\\_20230124\\_01\\_testimony.html](http://kslegislature.org/li/b2023_24/committees/cte_h_soc_srvcs_bdgt_1/misc_documents/download_testimony/cte_h_soc_srvcs_bdgt_1_20230124_01_testimony.html)

<sup>3</sup> CareQuest Institute for Oral Health: Medicaid Adult Dental Benefit Coverage Checker, <https://www.carequest.org/Medicaid-Adult-Dental-Coverage-Checker>