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2018 Legislative Priorities

Continue to Fund Missouri Medicaid Adult Dental Benefits

Thanks to the Missouri Legislature for ongoing support of a limited Medicaid adult dental benefit, including preventive care.

The Coalition recognizes that setting Missouri's budget is a challenging task and ask that you continue to support the prudent decision of the Missouri Legislature to fund Medicaid adult dental benefits.

In 2014, Emergency Room (ER) usage for untreated dental conditions neared \$17 million. Since reinstatement of a limited adult dental benefit package in May of 2016, Missouri has seen a reduction in ER usage for untreated dental conditions, ensuring a more efficient Medicaid system. During 2016 there was about a 12% decrease in total Medicaid dental visits to the ER. About \$40 million in dental services for thousands of Medicaid-eligible Missourians were delivered in 2016. Of these services, 85% were delivered in community health centers; only about 20% of the cost for those services came from state funds.

Access to routine dental care, including preventive services, saves limited state resources in additional ways. The National Association of Dental Plans released a study in late 2017 showing that adults receiving Medicaid preventive dental benefits have lower costs for chronic health conditions. Many studies indicate that dental health is integral to overall health.

This positive policy change has increased health, employability and access to oral health care.

Support HB 2213 - Legislation to Support Local Public Water Fluoridation Decisions

HB 2213 was filed by Representative Lichtenegger to ensure that local people benefit from the input of their county health department in considering public water fluoridation. This legislation will ensure that community members and decision-makers are fully informed with accurate information from local people working to support community health.

Support HB 1617 - Telehealth Legislation

Representative Barnes has filed legislation to reduce regulatory burdens on telehealth. The Coalition supports this legislation because it will make it easier to engage in telehealth services, including teledentistry. Teledentistry will increase access to dental services in the many underserved areas of Missouri, particularly in rural areas.