

Healthy Kids Dental improves oral health of children enrolled in Medicaid

In 2000, Delta Dental expanded its commitment to Michigan children by teaming up with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services to help improve the dental health of those in greatest need. With the support of Michigan dentists, the Healthy Kids Dental (HKD) program was launched to improve access to dental care for Medicaid-eligible children. Today, HKD is available in all of Michigan's 83 counties and nearly one million children who have Medicaid and are under age 21 have HKD coverage.



What is Healthy Kids Dental?

HKD is a dental benefit program for Medicaid-eligible children. It covers dental services such as X-rays, cleanings, fillings, root canals, tooth extractions and dentures. Beneficiaries receive treatment from dentists who participate with Delta Dental's HKD program, which includes approximately 80 percent of Michigan dentists.

HKD increases dental visits

Studies show children with HKD coverage are more likely to receive dental treatment than those with traditional Medicaid Fee-for-Service (FFS) dental coverage. In fact, dental visits are significantly higher for children who are enrolled in HKD. A number of factors contribute to the increase in utilization: more dentists in Michigan accept HKD than regular Medicaid FFS; a larger dental network means travel distance for dental appointments has been cut by two thirds; and, because the program is administered by a private plan and care is delivered primarily by dentists in private practice, the HKD beneficiaries are mainstreamed into the regular system of care and are more likely to have a "dental home."

A national model for access

HKD's record of success has generated interest and accolades from across the country. In 2004, the American Dental Association (ADA) named Michigan's HKD program one of five national models for improving access to dental care for low-income populations. According to the ADA white paper, "State and Community Models for Improving Access to Dental Care for the Underserved," the program exemplifies innovative ideas and reflects a consensus that "only through public-private collaborations" will the nation make substantive progress in improving access to care for those in need.

Working together to improve oral health

At Delta Dental, we are proud of the partnerships we have formed with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services and Michigan's dentists. We recognize the importance of increasing access to dental care and will continue to work together to meet the needs of the Medicaid population.

Delta Dental of Michigan is the leading group dental benefits provider in the state. The company is headquartered in Okemos, Michigan, and also has offices in Farmington Hills, Michigan. For more information, visit www.deltadentalmi.com.