

January 20, 2025

His Excellency Patrick Morrissey
Office of the Governor
WV State Capitol
Charleston, WV 25305

Dear Governor Morrissey:

The West Virginia Dental Association congratulates you on becoming the 37th Governor of the Great State of West Virginia!

Our professional association boasts a membership of over 650 dentists across the State. Most of our members are West Virginian born and bred, 83% of whom attended the West Virginia University School of Dentistry and are proud to be owners of small businesses serving our communities.

I am writing today to request your consideration of strategically increasing select dental Medicaid fees to providers. A few points to contemplate:

- West Virginia expanded Adult Medicaid benefits in 2020.
- The program is costing the state HALF of what was projected.
- Federal Center for Medicaid Services (**CMS**) **pays 75% of the cost** of the program.
- Current procedure fees were based on an American Dental Association survey that had very limited self-report data from dentists and is no longer published.
- Significant inflation has occurred since 2020 (greater than 20%!).
- Dental Lab fees have increased higher than inflation
- WV Medicaid issued a report in March 2024 indicating “more dentists are needed to serve the state’s Medicaid population, but current fees are too low to attract more dentists.”
- Medicaid dental reimbursement is governed by a State Plan Amendment, which is under 1control of WV BMS and the Executive Branch.

The WVDA undertook a comparative analysis of both surrounding state Medicaid dental fees and those of the southern states (except Florida). Our state is competitive with some fees, but is significantly lower in others. We believe an across-the-board increase will NOT fix the significant issues with deficiencies in the Medicaid dental fee schedule.

Therefore, we would appreciate your consideration of a **targeted increase of fees for services that are significantly lower** than other states and those that will make provision of Medicaid dental services more attractive to providers.

The WVDA met with WV Medicaid staff on January 10, 2025 with this proposal. Your Medicaid staff have detailed reasons for each of the requested increases, but brief explanations are included on the chart on page 3, so you can better understand how our state's fees compare to surrounding and/or southern states.

Of the over 140 dental codes that WV Medicaid pays providers, we would appreciate your consideration of increasing approximately one-third of those codes, some costing the state only one to three dollars each (due to the 75/25 split with CMS).

It is also important to note that revenue for the expansion of adult dental benefits was provided through an HMO tax in 2020 in Senate Bill 648. The fiscal note attached to the bill estimated the program would cost \$8.8 million of state dollars.

However, according to WV BMS' January 2025 Legislative Interim Adult Dental Report, **the program is currently only costing the state \$4.2 million** (25% state share of the reported \$16.8 million cost in 2023). Clearly, WV Medicaid expected to pay twice as much as it is currently paying for the expanded adult benefits.

Good oral health is essential to helping our Medicaid beneficiaries move to the ranks of the employed. This was a key reason the State Senate championed the expansion of adult dental benefits. In order to properly serve that population, it is absolutely essential the state strategically revisit the Medicaid dental reimbursement schedule.

Thank you for your consideration. The WVDA stands ready to work with your Administration to get Medicaid recipients back to work through good oral health!

Sincerely,



Hallie Mason
WVDA Executive Director.