

**COMMENTS/QUESTIONS REGARDING ADULT PREVENTATIVE DENTAL
BENEFIT:**

LaTray Walker:

“In referring to the statement below:

“Medicaid enrolled dentists to be reimbursed by the Healthy Connections Fee-for-Service program for services that include cleanings, fillings and extractions for adults over the age of 21. The preventative dental benefit includes a maximum benefit of \$750 per beneficiary per state fiscal year (July to June).”

Will Independent Dental Hygienist with general supervision by dentist be able to provide services to Medicaid recipients and be reimbursed?”

SCDHHS Response: Dental Hygienists are not enrolled providers with SC Healthy Connections and are not able to be reimbursed for services to any of our beneficiaries.

Brian Schleifer, President, DentalSmart

“The link between dental health and general health has been well documented. DentalSmart feels this is a very valuable benefit to the citizens of South Carolina.

We would like to be added to any provider list for dental services provided by Medicaid enrolled dentists.

We look forward to approval of this proposal.”

SCDHHS Response: To be added to any provider lists on dental, the provider needs to register for Medicaid bulletins.

COMMENTS:

Rebekah Mathews, SC Executive Director, DentaQuest

“DentaQuest, the dental Administrative Service Organization (ASO) to the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (SCDHHS), fully supports the incorporation of additional dental benefits for adults within South Carolina’s Medicaid plan.

Tooth decay is often avoidable and lack of coverage for preventive services, early diagnosis, and interventions leaves individuals with few options for treatment – and for tooth retention. Issues that could have been identified early or even prevented through

routine evaluations may progress, leading to lower quality of life and poor health outcomes.

SCDHHS has wisely termed the new adult benefit a preventive model. Since SCDHHS is replacing the emergency-only adult dental coverage with a model that includes preventive and restorative care, adult beneficiaries will be given choices in the dental care they receive under *Healthy Connections*.

DentaQuest firmly believes that oral health is a crucial part of overall health, no matter one's age. Untreated dental disease has been associated with many complicated and expensive medical complications and conditions including pre-term and low birth weight babies, diabetes, and heart disease.

SCDHHS recognizes the relationship between oral health and overall health and has incorporated focus on oral health with a number of its health outcome initiatives.

Inappropriate use of emergency rooms for dental ailments is also a shared concern among SCDHHS, South Carolina's hospitals, and the medical and dental community. DentaQuest is supportive of SCDHHS and its collaborative efforts with hospitals and dental providers working to enact strategies that will divert dental issues from emergency rooms to dental providers capable of handling emergency, urgent and routine treatment within their practices.

DentaQuest commends Governor Haley, the South Carolina General Assembly and SCDHHS for its recognition of the importance of oral health and for the shared commitment to extending dental coverage to adult *Healthy Connections* beneficiaries."

Ever S. Collier, APRN, Eau Claire Cooperative Health Centers, Inc.

"I would like to extend my support for the coverage of adult dental services by Medicaid in South Carolina. The data to support this need is solid and widespread. It is important that we as healthcare professionals and for our legislators to consider the long-term effects that stem from a lack of dental care and the importance of prevention. With a growing number of patients with multiple co-morbidities, we must take into account the role of oral health and its impact on the rest of the body."