



Oral Health Coverage for Children and Pregnant Women in Healthcare Reform

Given that

- Oral Health is essential to overall health.ⁱ Oral diseases are common, costly to medical insurance if left untreated, and consequential to eating, speaking, and learning.
- Oral conditions worsen many costly medical conditions (including diabetes and cardiovascular health) and are associated with poorer pregnancy outcomes.
- For every child lacking medical coverage, two lack dental coverage.
- A third of all adults have no dental coverage.ⁱⁱ
- Parents cite dental problems as the most unmet healthcare need of their children.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Having dental coverage increases use of cost-effective dental preventive services.^{iv}
- 3-in-5 women do not receive a dental visit while pregnant yet poor perinatal health increases risk for premature birth and tooth decay transmission to their children.

Therefore, in order to improve overall health and oral health in a cost effective way

- **Health reform must guarantee all children and pregnant women coverage for dental services** necessary to prevent disease and promote oral health, restore oral structure to health and function and treat emergency conditions. (CHIP language)
- Any entity established to make recommendations on coverage, quality, prevention, or access must make recommendations on oral health for children and pregnant women.

The Children's Dental Health Project is a national non-profit organization with the mission to advance policies that improve children's access to oral health.

June 2009

ⁱ Surgeon General's Report, Oral Health in America

ⁱⁱ Agency for Health Care Research and Quality, Medical Panel Expenditure Survey

ⁱⁱⁱ Agency for Health Care Research and Quality National Survey of Children's Health

^{iv} Agency for Health Care Research and Quality, Medical Panel Expenditure Survey