

APRIL 2022

Oral Health Parent Advisory Committee



Medicaid is an important source of dental care serving approximately 40% of all children across the state Florida. The program provides comprehensive dental services resulting in improved health outcomes for children especially those that are vulnerable: low-income children, children with special needs and disabilities, and children in desperate family situations (e.g., foster care, residential treatment, juvenile detention). Despite the programs efforts to ensure that every child has the care they need to thrive, many Medicaid-enrolled children experience higher rates of dental disease and face significant barriers to access and utilization of oral health services in Florida.

There is a growing body of evidence connecting oral health to overall health and wellbeing and maintaining good oral health has become an increasing concern among parents and caretakers of Medicaid-enrolled children. The Oral Health Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) plays a crucial role in ensuring equitable access to quality oral health services for children served by state Medicaid program. The Oral Health PAC is an advocacy group comprised of parents and caretaker from across the state of Florida whose children, under 18 years of age, rely on Medicaid for their dental care. The committee advocates for families that access dental care through Medicaid helping to ensure that Medicaid-enrolled children and their families have a voice and an opportunity to shape the services that they receive.

The PAC's goal is to increase access to regular, quality dental care for Medicaid-enrolled children across the state of Florida. PAC's advocacy strategy aims to affect change and influence the oral health system by strengthening Medicaid consumer oral health service access and utilization. Specifically, PAC's advocacy efforts center on the following priority: Advocating for the development of an accurately and regularly updated Medicaid provider directory. This lack provider capacity within the Florida's Medicaid network compounded with inaccurate provider directories pose unnecessary barriers for parents and caretakers of Medicaid-enrolled children impacting access to care and further contributing to profound and enduring oral health disparities among this population.

Working collaboratively with the Florida Oral Health Alliance and FIHI's extensive network of community champions, oral health stakeholders, and partners, the PAC aims to affect change by shifting the conversation and traditional power dynamics to increase their share of voice at the state level. Leveraging the oral health experiences of the members and research, resources, data, and tools developed by FIHI, the PAC seeks to actively participate as change agents and leaders to guide policies and practice that prioritize and address consumer needs.

