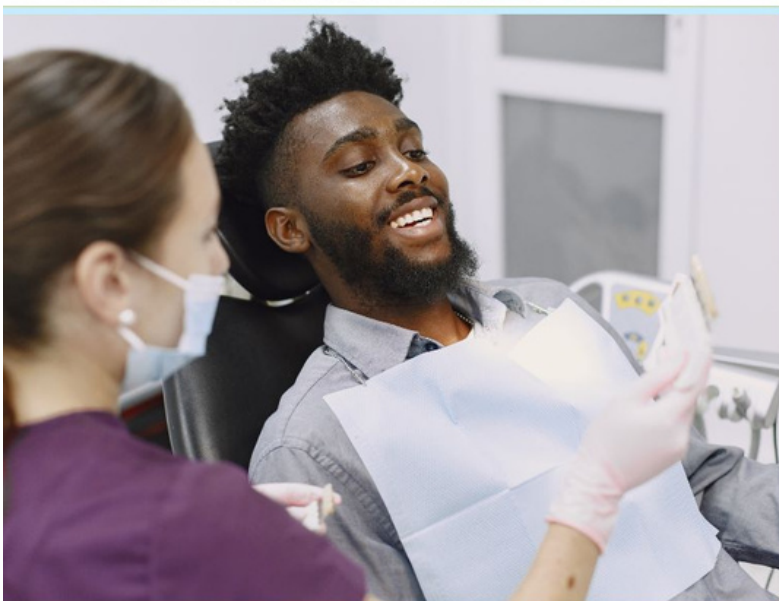




**CONNECTICUT
DENTAL**
HEALTH PARTNERSHIP
the dental plan for
HUSKY Health

2024 Connecticut Medicaid Oral Health Equity

FOLLOW UP REPORT

The Connecticut Dental Health Partnership is the Dental Plan for HUSKY Health and is administered by BeneCare Dental Plans under a contract with the Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS).

Our mission is to enable all HUSKY Health members to achieve and maintain good oral health. We work to ensure all members have equitable access to oral health services.

**JUNE 2024
CTDHP.ORG**

The Connecticut Dental Health Partnership would like to thank HUSKY Health Members, the Dental Providers, community partners and advocates, the Department of Social Services and the staff at CTDHP; Member Care Community Connection Team, Member Services Call Center, Grievance and Appeals, Network Development, Communications, and IT team, who all work tirelessly to ensure all HUSKY Health members have equitable access to oral health services.



Project Lead:

Awilda Maldonado, Oral Health Equity Officer

*CT Dental Health Partnership - BeneCare Dental Plans 2024
Connecticut Medicaid Oral Health Equity Status Report.
Farmington, CT*

*Please also visit ctdhp.org in the About Us section to
review previous Oral Health Equity Reports*

www.ctdhp.org

communitypartners@ctdhp.com

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THE CONNECTICUT DENTAL HEALTH PARTNERSHIP

The Connecticut Dental Health Partnership is the Dental Plan for HUSKY Health and is administered by BeneCare Dental Plans under a contract with the Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS).

DSS is the single state agency responsible for the administration of the State's Connecticut Medicaid Assistance Program and the Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). Medicaid and SCHIP are collectively described as the HUSKY Health Program.

The Connecticut Dental Health Partnership (CTDHP) operates a responsive Member Services Call Center for approximately 1,000,000 Connecticut residents who benefit from dental and oral healthcare as a part of HUSKY Health (Medicaid) programs. There are also a team of statewide Community Engagement Specialists and Oral Health Navigators to provide training and help members with more complex oral healthcare needs.



The Partnership oversees a broad network of dental providers who provide quality services to HUSKY Health and Covered CT members.

The Connecticut Dental Health Partnership also handles the Grievance and Appeals process. Grievance and Appeals Representatives are here to help you understand why a service may or may not be covered and guide you through all the steps in the appeals process.

“

The Connecticut Dental Health Partnership is committed to achieving Oral Health Equity. Our mission is to enable all HUSKY Health members to achieve and maintain good oral health. We work to ensure all members have equitable access to oral health services.

”

INTRODUCTION

The HUSKY Health Community is diverse. So are our services to them. At the Connecticut Dental Health Partnership, we are committed to serving the diverse HUSKY Health Member population. We embrace inclusivity and strive to provide culturally competent services that meet the unique needs of individuals from various backgrounds. Our approach ensures that every Member receives personalized support and access to resources that empower them to reach their utmost oral health potential.

In 2023, the Connecticut Dental Health Partnership (CTDHP) published its third Medicaid Oral Health Equity Report,¹ focusing on oral health disparities within the state's Medicaid population during 2020-2021, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. This report, based on population-level dental utilization analysis, member feedback from the 2023 HUSKY Health Dental Plan Benefit Member Survey, and 2023 HUSKY Health dental provider data, identified five key disparities.

To address these, interventions were outlined in a three categories:

1. Ongoing broad and targeted initiatives by CTDHP
 - Planned Actions 2023 - 2025
2. Future planned interventions
3. Seven policy recommendations for advocates and stakeholders to promote health equity

The 2024 Medicaid Oral Health Equity follow-up report provides an update on the progress of these action plans, one year after the initial report's release.

1. CT Dental Health Partnership-BeneCare Dental Plans (2023) HUSKY Health Oral Health Equity Report. Farmington, CT. June 2023

CTDHP'S PLANNED ACTIONS 2023-2025

Since the first publication of the Oral Health Equity Report in 2021, the CT Dental Health Partnership (CTDHP) has centered its resources and action on reducing oral health disparities. The strategy has been twofold:

1. Broad interventions that empower all HUSKY Health members, including the populations with identified disparities, and
2. Targeted interventions to specific populations where oral health disparities exist.



Broad Interventions

Broad Interventions for 2023-2025, based on 2023 Health Equity Report include:

1. Member Based Tools
2. Member Services
3. Member Engagement
4. Community Partner Tools

CTDHP'S PLANNED ACTIONS 2023-2025

Member Based Tools

By integrating new features in our Provider Search tools, we aim to enhance accessibility and ensure that HUSKY Health members have access to the tailored dental care they require.

INTERVENTION: Enhance the online provider survey process to capture more provider information which will enable more accurate detail on the Provider Locator Tool that members use to select providers.

In 2024, CTDHP took significant steps to improve the Provider Locator Tool utilized by HUSKY Health members in selecting their healthcare providers. One significant enhancement was transitioning the provider survey process to an online platform, enabling more comprehensive data capture. This updated survey now includes crucial information such as languages spoken in the dental office and specific questions addressing services tailored to Members with special healthcare needs.

Sample of Online Provider Survey Questions:

1. Will your practice accommodate or have a consultation for members with special health care needs?
2. Do any of your providers have specialized training in working with patients with Special Health Care Needs?
3. Does your office utilize the CTDHP Oral Health Navigation referral tool resource for patients with complex or acute care needs that would benefit from navigation supports? [Refer A Client - HUSKY Dental \(ctdhp.org\)](#). (Y/N)

CTDHP'S PLANNED ACTIONS 2023-2025

Member Services

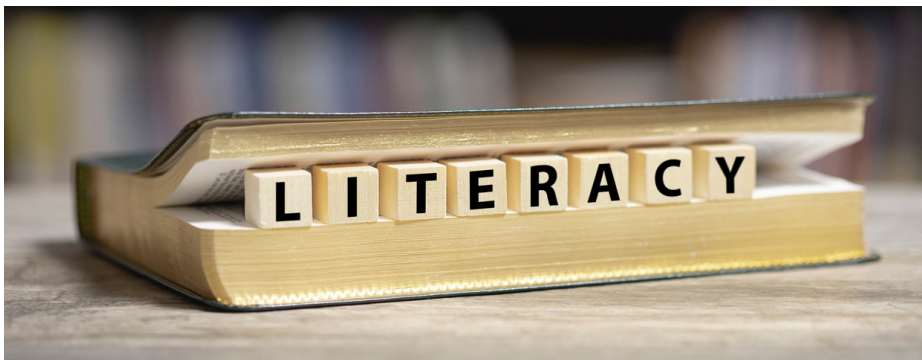
INTERVENTION: Develop Oral Health Literacy and behavior assessment tools to learn how members increase their oral health skills and behaviors after participating in CTDHP-led training and events as well as via Oral Health Navigation services.

Oral Health Literacy serves as a cornerstone for promoting good oral hygiene and preventing dental issues among individuals. Understanding how to interpret and apply oral health information is vital for maintaining optimal oral health.

Measuring behavior related to oral health helps identify areas for improvement and tailor interventions. Together, these components empower individuals to make informed decisions about their oral health, ultimately leading to better overall well-being.

CTDHP has partnered with the University of Connecticut to systematize the process of assessing oral health literacy, focusing on both data collection and analysis. Currently, we are actively gathering pre - and post - testing data to effectively gauge the oral health literacy levels of our Members before and after interventions conducted by our dedicated Oral Health Navigators.

Moving forward, our pilot initiative aims to showcase the tangible impact of these interventions by measuring improvements and seamlessly integrating successful strategies into standard work practices. We are committed to reporting the outcomes of our efforts, underscoring our dedication to promoting oral health literacy and enhancing the overall well-being of our Members.



CTDHP'S PLANNED ACTIONS 2023-2025

Member Services, *continued*

INTERVENTION: Continue to learn from members with updated annual member experience surveys, and community-based forums in collaboration with the CT Oral Health Initiative (COHI), and the HUSKY Health Member Advisory Workgroup.

HUSKY Health Member Survey

In 2023, CTDHP collaborated with The YALE Consultation Center, Inc (TCC) to conduct a comprehensive survey among HUSKY Health members, aimed at gaining insights into their experiences with dental services. The survey included questions from the Consumer Assessment of Health Care Providers and Systems (CAHPS) Dental Plan Survey, a standardized questionnaire that asks adult enrollees in dental plans to report on their experiences with care and services from a dental plan, the dentists, and their staff.



Currently, TCC is actively engaged in the analysis phase of the Member Survey Report, meticulously examining the gathered data to extract meaningful findings. These findings hold significant value as they will be integrated into CTDHP's upcoming Oral Health Equity Report and will inform programmatic interventions for State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2025, providing firsthand perspectives from HUSKY Health members.

HUSKY Health Member Advisory Board

Community Health Network of Connecticut, Inc.® (CHNCT), the State of Connecticut's Medical Administrative Services Organization (ASO) for the HUSKY Health Program, leads a monthly Member Advisory Workgroup for HUSKY Health members. Within this forum, members contribute invaluable input and feedback, which serve as pivotal guides in enhancing HUSKY Health services for both themselves and their families. CTDHP collaborates with CHNCT to engage in these meetings periodically, utilizing the workgroup to help improve the dental program. The active involvement of HUSKY Health Members has played a crucial role in shaping various facets of CTDHP's outreach efforts, including the development of educational materials, member newsletters, as well as crafting impactful social media and billboard messaging. This collaboration underscores CTDHP's commitment to inclusivity and Member-centered care, ensuring that the voices of those served are at the forefront of service enhancements and communication strategies.

CTDHP'S PLANNED ACTIONS 2023-2025

Member Services, *continued*

All Administrative Services Only (ASO) Community Presentations

CTDHP actively participates in the HUSKY Health Program Community Meetings presented by: The Connecticut Behavioral Health Partnership (Carelton), Community Health Network of Connecticut, Inc. The Connecticut Dental Health Partnership (BeneCare), Veyo / MTM Transportation and HUSKY Health Eligibility. In these meetings HUSKY Health Members learn about HUSKY Health Benefits and Services:



- Who is eligible for HUSKY Health services?
- How the HUSKY Health program is administered.
- How to enroll in the HUSKY Health program.
- What services are covered under the HUSKY Health program?
- How to find a provider.
- Who are our partners?

The Connecticut Oral Health Initiative (COHI)

The Connecticut Oral Health Initiative (COHI) is a broad-based coalition dedicated to promoting Oral Health for All' through advocacy and education. COHI works with a variety of partners across the state to serve underserved populations to have equitable access to oral healthcare services. CTDHP has been actively engaged in joint efforts with COHI on various oral health initiatives, and will continue ongoing discussions to explore opportunities for continued partnership, such as participating in their community-based forums, as we collectively work towards improving oral health outcomes for all individuals in Connecticut.

Medical Assistance Program Oversight Council (MAPOC)

The Medical Assistance Program Oversight Council (MAPOC) in Connecticut plays a crucial role in advising and monitoring the state's Medicaid programs on various matters related to program planning, implementation, and quality measures. CTDHP is consistently present for MAPOC quality and access coordination of care committee, which are comprised prominently of Medicaid members.

CTDHP'S PLANNED ACTIONS 2023-2025

Member Services, *continued*

INTERVENTION: Deepen trauma informed skill sets within Oral Health Navigation and Member Services Center teams.



The team at CTDHP is continuously strengthening its trauma informed skills through ongoing education and training, such as the Statewide Care Coordination Forum, to learn how to engage trauma survivors in informed manner while also honoring their resilience and agency in the recovery journey.

Additionally, staff members have completed a comprehensive 7.5-hour training on Adult Mental Health First Aid, an interactive, skills-based course that teaches adults how to identify, understand, and respond to signs of a potential mental health or substance use challenges among adults. Upon completion of the training, staff receive certificates, valid for three years, further enhancing their ability to support those in need.

CTDHP'S PLANNED ACTIONS 2023-2025

Member Engagement

INTERVENTION: Incorporate texting into routine member engagement efforts.

Texting was piloted in 2023 and 2024 to learn the operational needs to build a sustainable texting program and learn member outcomes from texting. The first pilot identified HUSKY Health Members who had not utilized any dental services in the prior twelve months and via claims identification has a Diabetes Type 2 diagnosis.

This cohort was segmented into different communications channels for outreach, automated phone calls, email, mailed letter, and texting. Member's dental utilization was then tracked for 90 days after the contact was made and evaluated by channel. (See table below).

Type 2 Diabetes

Target Population : 18,672

Channel 1

 1x Auto calls

Any Utilization After 90 Days: 2.7%

3rd

Target Population : 19,556

Channel 2

 1x Email

Any Utilization After 90 Days: 6.6%

1st

Target Population : 23,959

Channel 3

 1x Letter

Any Utilization After 90 Days: 2.6%

4th

Target Population : 6,543

Channel 4

 1x Text

Any Utilization After 90 Days: 4.9%

2nd

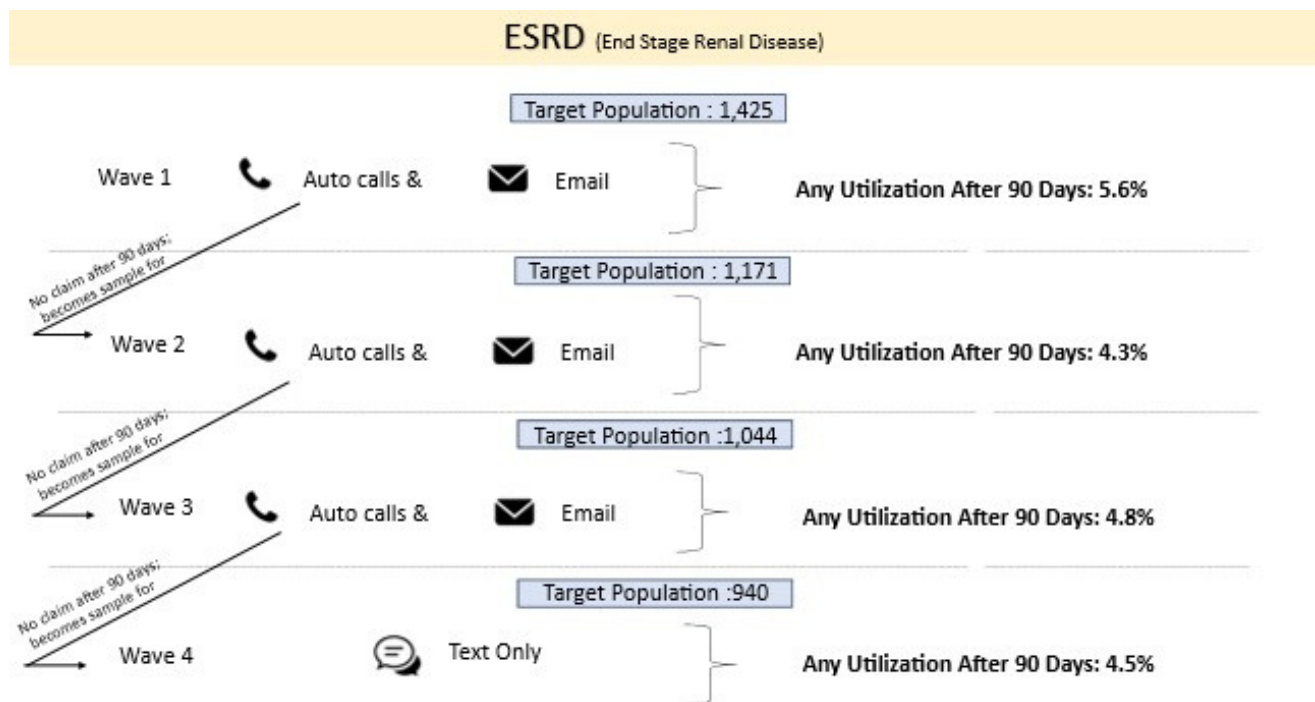
Texting yielded the second largest utilization rate for the population.

CTDHP'S PLANNED ACTIONS 2023-2025

Member Engagement, *continued*

A second pilot explored a “wave” concept currently deployed at CTDHP with texting added to the process. In this pilot, 1,425 HUSKY Health Members living with End State Renal Disease who had not been to the dentist in the prior twelve months were contacted via a series of channels.

The total population received an automated call plus email. The population that did not utilize dental services 90 days from the intervention were then contacted again via automated call and email. The subsequent non-utilizing population received an additional automated call and email. The final non-utilizing population received a text only. This last “wave” population was likely the hardest to respond to messaging given the subsequent attempts, however, 4.5% did utilize dental services. (See table below Fig.2).



The pilots have enabled CTDHP to further the use of texting in its direct to member engagement efforts and continues to work on systematizing both the process and outcomes measurement.

CTDHP'S PLANNED ACTIONS 2023-2025

Member Engagement, *continued*

Oral Health Navigation Texting

Texting has become a standard practice in CTDHP's workflow and a key component of our Oral Health Navigation program, serving as an additional communication channel to enhance our ability to engage with our Members effectively, ensuring a seamless interaction and support throughout their oral health journey.

INTERVENTION: Deepen analytic capabilities to continuously learn and improve upon the most effective communication channels and messages.

For SFY 2025, CTDHP will maintain our focus on utilizing texting, and other communication channels to reach our Members. Additionally, we plan to collaborate with Community Health Network, Department of Social Services, and Caredon to enhance our messaging strategy, aiming for a more comprehensive and holistic approach. This collaboration will allow us to closely study the outcomes of our messaging efforts, identifying those individuals who respond positively to our messages and tailoring our approach accordingly for improved effectiveness.

INTERVENTION: Deepen dental benefit education and drive members to the tools and resources that support the use of their benefits.

Outreach Events/Presentations/Collaborations

2024 Dr. Tooth Fairy Campaign: Targeted Education and Broad Media Campaign

Building off the insights gained from the successful 2023 Dr. Tooth Fairy Campaign in partnership with the Connecticut State Dental Foundation, CTDHP intends to continue to use the Dr. Tooth Fairy as a mascot.

Our goal remains to captivate the attention of children and their parents, fostering awareness about the significance of oral health. By utilizing Dr. Tooth Fairy's engaging presence, we aim to drive members towards accessing the tools and resources available to maximize their oral health benefits effectively.



CTDHP'S PLANNED ACTIONS 2023-2025

Member Engagement, *continued*

Through this continued initiative, we aspire to empower individuals to prioritize and maintain optimal oral health outcomes. The planned communications tactics included:

- An audio recording that has an all-encompassing message around oral health with specific attention to losing a tooth, brushing and flossing regularly, having a dental home to the dedicated phone line in English and Spanish. This was a change from last year's (2022) multiple messages that outcomes indicated were too long and the listener did not complete the full message.
- Same audio recording in web-based format in English, Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, and Polish.
- More promotional materials to provide directly to children by our Community Engagement Specialist Team through in-person education and local connection building directing them to Dr. Tooth Fairy audio.
- Social Media Campaigns and boosted campaigns in Facebook and Instagram.
- Video content, short, animated video that is American Disability Act compliant for YouTube use. 1,060 views of the Dr. Tooth Fairy Video to date.
- Member Engagement Campaign via Member E-News
- Public Relations – send press release to media across the state.



Children's Dental Health Month Collaboration Tactics:

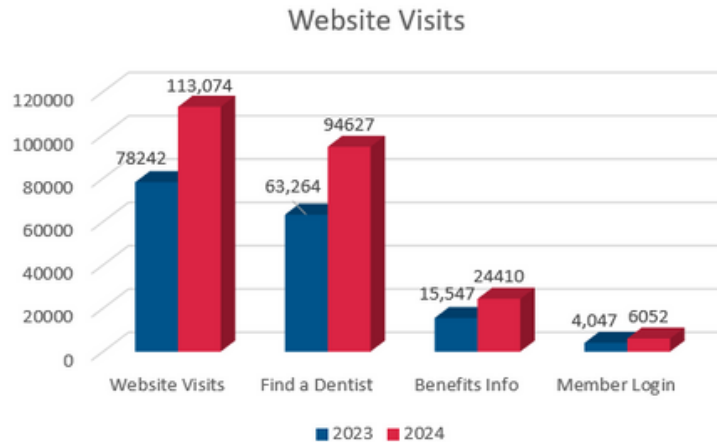
- 4-weeks of promotion and oral health messages to all Office of Early Childhood - Family Visiting Program providers (19 Lead Partners and 23 sub-contracted agencies) in the state via their communications vehicles.
- Dr. Tooth Fairy Materials and CTDHP educational curriculum were shared with preschool students at 4 YMCA Programs targeted in our low-utilization zip codes. Current efforts are underway with Southington Cheshire YMCA, Waterbury YMCA, Middlesex YMCA, Naugatuck YMCA, and Regional YMCA in Danbury.

CTDHP'S PLANNED ACTIONS 2023-2025

Member Engagement, *continued*

Year Long Website Activity, Social Media Posts and Member Newsletters:

In FY 2024 to date (as of 6/19/24) over 94,000 clicked online to find a dentist; over 24,400 checked out their benefits information and over 6,050 logged in to view their specific information. All metrics increased compared to FY 2023.



Social Media Posts:

To further drive members to the tools and resources that support the use of their HUSKY Health dental benefits, CTDHP's Social Media Campaigns featured educational oral health posts on how to find a dentist, along with dental benefit information. These were included on social media post on Facebook, X, Instagram, and now on YouTube.

CTDHP social media engagement posts for SFY 2024 (to date 6/19/24):

Social Media Posts FY'24 (7/1/23 through 6/19/24)	
Facebook	43
Instagram	43
X	34
You Tube Views	597
Overall Facebook and Instagram Reach (to 5/24)	98,167
Overall Facebook and Instagram Engagement (to 5/24)	1,541

CTDHP'S PLANNED ACTIONS 2023-2025

Member Engagement, *continued*

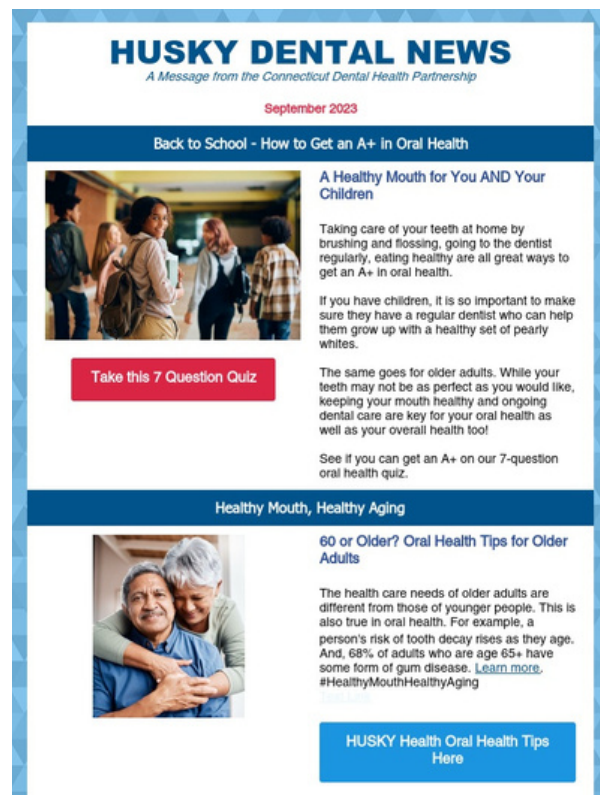
Sample Social Media Post:



"HUSKY Health members have dental benefits through the CT Dental Health Partnership. We can help you find a dentist and schedule your first appointment. Language assistance services and transportation services are also available. Learn more about your dental benefits here: ctdhp.org/we-care-about-your-dental-health. #huskydental #medicaid"

Member Newsletters:

In SFY 2024, eight Member Newsletters in both English and Spanish were sent to 1,446,700 HUSKY Health Members with an average open rate of 46.6%.

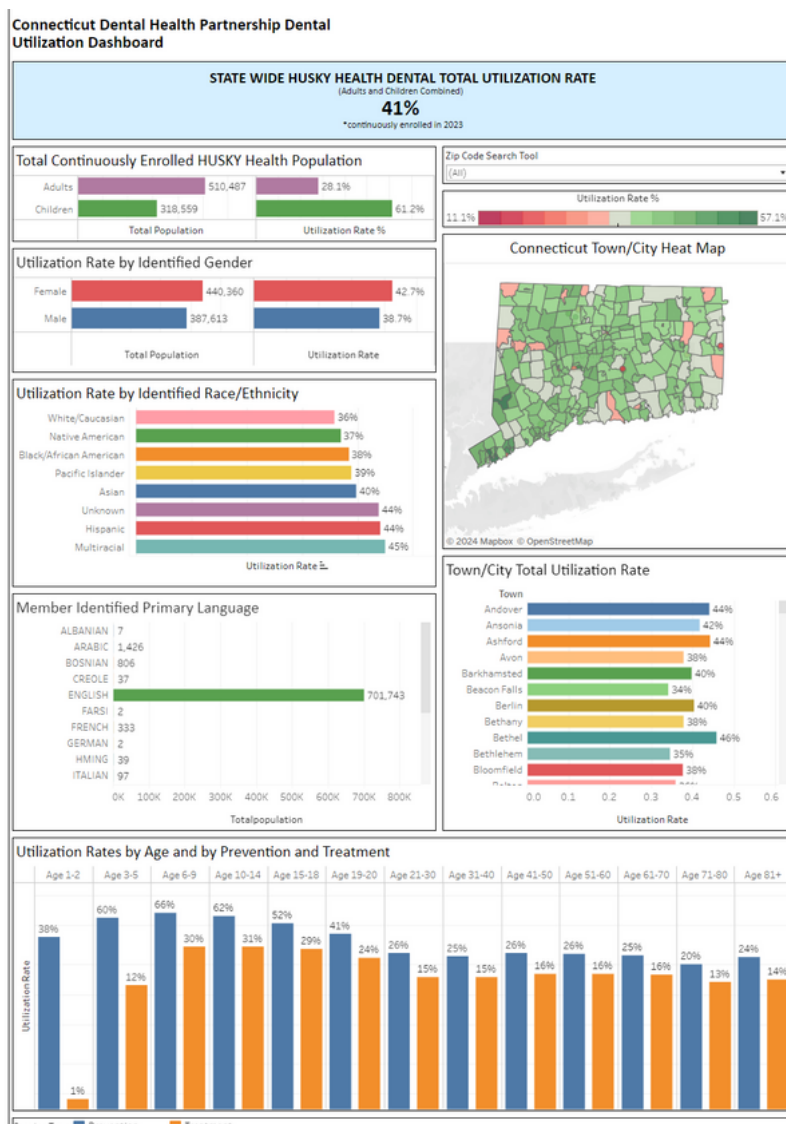


CTDHP'S PLANNED ACTIONS 2023-2025

Community Partner Tools

INITIATIVE: Launch and expand the HUSKY Dental Utilization Dashboard to all CTDHP registered community partners.

The CT Dental Health Partnership Dental Utilization Dashboard (Fig.3) was designed as a versatile platform for seamlessly accessing data concerning our continuously enrolled members within a given calendar year. Launched in 2023 with the presentation of 2022 data, this platform saw the release of its updated 2024 version this year, showcasing data from 2023.



A primary objective during its development was to create a user-friendly application capable of managing extensive datasets while remaining simple, intuitive and easy to navigate enabling users to find specific data about different groups of people, making it easier for them to find what they need. The dashboard offers a range of filters, including:

- age group
- primary language
- gender
- zip code
- race & ethnicity
- town/city

CTDHP'S PLANNED ACTIONS 2023-2025

Community Partner Tools, *continued*

With dynamic filters, the dashboard adjusts all displayed data according to the selected filter, making it easy for users to find specific information quickly.

Here's how it helps:

- Filter Flexibility: Users can select one or more filters simultaneously.
- Efficient Data Access: Users can access targeted population data in just a few clicks.

For example:

- Users can quickly find data for Spanish-speaking, female Hispanic children in zip code 06855.
- The dashboard facilitates comparison of Prevention and Treatment data across different age groups.
- It offers a user-friendly interface with a section dedicated to defining the data being used.

In 2023, we've successfully formed 151 partnerships with a diverse range of community-driven organizations, including the Connecticut Oral Health Initiative, Department of Children and Families, UCONN Health Dental, Harvard School of Public Health, Catholic Charities, and CREC Head Start. Looking ahead, we aim to expand our network of partnerships to further combat oral health disparities.

INITIATIVE: Implement oral health-focused continuing education programming to non-dental professionals to increase the connection of and awareness of oral health as a factor to overall health and wellbeing including trauma informed care.

CTDHP is dedicated to delivering oral health-focused continuing education programming to non-dental professionals, with the aim of enhancing awareness of oral health's significance in overall health and wellbeing, including trauma-informed care. As part of our efforts, we are developing a Learning Management System to streamline our online learning initiatives.

CTDHP'S PLANNED ACTIONS 2023-2025

Community Partner Tools, *continued*

One of our key courses will be tailored for Social Workers, equipping them with knowledge on how poor oral health and barriers to accessing oral health services impact their clients' psychosocial development, behaviors, and overall functioning throughout their lives.

The screenshot shows the website for the Oral Health Training Academy of CT. The header is dark blue with the academy's logo on the left and navigation links (HOME, COURSE CATALOG, SIGNUP, LOGIN) on the right. The main content area features a course titled "The Social Worker's Role in Oral Health" under the "Social Services" category. It includes a welcome message, a description of oral health's importance, and a "Get this course" button. A small image of a woman brushing her teeth is also present.

Oral Health Training Academy of CT

HOME COURSE CATALOG SIGNUP LOGIN

Social Services

The Social Worker's Role in Oral Health

Welcome to the Social Worker's Role in Oral Health!

Oral health is a core component of overall health. An unhealthy mouth can negatively impact overall health, functioning, and well-being.

Social Workers can play a key role in improving their clients' health and wellbeing, by looking for signs of oral health neglect or need, and integrating oral health education into their client interactions.

This course can give you a better understanding of the connections between oral health and the well-being of the individuals, families, and communities you serve. And, you will be able to walk away with practical tools you can use with clients. This course should take you about 1.5 hours to complete, including lessons to check your knowledge along the way.

Get this course

This comprehensive course will furnish social workers with the tools necessary to integrate oral health considerations into client assessment, treatment planning, goal setting, and interventions. By empowering social workers with this knowledge, we aim to enhance their ability to address the oral health needs of their clients effectively.

INITIATIVE: Implement dental provider trainings in CLAS/ADA and trauma informed care.



CTDHP has partnered with the CT State Dental Association to offer Cultural Competency Training to dental health professionals during their 157th Annual Charter Oak Dental Meeting. Led by our Oral Health Equity Officer, Awilda Maldonado, the training, titled "Advancing Cultural Competency in Patient-Centered Care," aimed to equip attendees with essential insights into Cultural and Linguistic Appropriate Services and the American with Disabilities Act. By enhancing their understanding of these key principles, participants were better prepared to elevate the quality of care they deliver to their diverse patient population.

CTDHP'S PLANNED ACTIONS 2023-2025



Targeted Interventions

Inspired by the Connecticut Behavioral Health Partnership and Caredon Behavioral Health's Health Equity Analysis work² CTDHP used a similar methodology and visualization to show evidence of oral health disparities across multiple population groups for its 2023 Oral Health Equity Report,³ which highlighted concerning trends on certain population groups.

The identified targeted groups and are:

- **Adults** (*Less than half of HUSKY Health adults utilize any dental services.*)
- **Tolland, Windham, and New London Counties** (*Members living in rural areas have different experiences navigating the oral health delivery system.*)
- **Men** (*Adults and children who identify as male utilize dental services less than those who identify as female.*)
- **The Asian Community** (*Asian adults and children consistently underutilize dental services.*)
- **Black/African American Children** (*Disparities among Black African American children are found in all child-based measures evaluated.*)

2. Council on Medicaid Assistance Program Oversight April 14, 2023 Meeting "Behavioral Health Quality Indicators and Outcomes for HUSKY Health Members" Caredon. Link: PowerPoint Presentation (ct.gov)

3. CT Dental Health Partnership-BeneCare Dental Plans (2023) HUSKY Health Oral health Equity Report. Farmington, CT. June 2023

CTDHP'S PLANNED ACTIONS 2023-2025

Targeted Population

ADULTS

PLANNED ACTION: Engage in testing of social media messaging targeting adults to learn what produces engagement.

Our following for Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn continue to grow steadily, quarter by quarter and we will continue to use these platforms for ongoing oral health education for the general public. Messaging that has received the most engagement from adults include our general Got HUSKY Health? and Call Before it Hurts posts. Also, collaborating with the HUSKY Health Member Advisory Workgroup, led by CHNCT and comprised of HUSKY Health Members, CHNCT staff, and representatives from the Department of Social Services, provided invaluable insights and feedback to enhance adult engagement strategies. Revised messaging resulted in higher engagement across the board.



CTDHP'S PLANNED ACTIONS 2023-2025

Targeted Population

ADULTS - *continued*

PLANNED ACTION: Increase use of Instagram and YouTube to reach a younger adult demographic.

Instagram followers are growing on a continual basis. Launching in 2022, we had 65 followers in July 2022, and as we near July 2024, we have increased our follower base 123% to 145 and had a combined Facebook and Instagram reach in SFY 2024 of over 144,000 (vs. 95,518 in SFY '2023).

Messaging was also developed to target this younger demographic. Copy for this sample Instagram Post: Red wine, cigarettes, vaping and hard candies can all eat away at your teeth in addition to impacting your overall health. Avoid these dental gremlins. And be sure you are brushing your teeth with fluoride toothpaste daily, flossing and seeing a dentist at least once a year. June is National Oral Health Month. Celebrate by getting rid of those gremlins. For more tips: ctdhp.org/kidsbrushandfloss. #nohm



Our YouTube Channel also launched in 2022 and has grown to have 12 videos, in multiple languages, that have garnered 1,039 views.

To further enhance engagement with the young adult demographic, CTDHP partnered with the Hamden Youth Services Neighborhood Ambassadors Bureau, consisting of 15 youth leaders engaged in community initiatives, to pilot our new Adolescent Curriculum. This collaboration aimed to solicit their insights and refine the curriculum to ensure it's both appealing and culturally relevant to this audience. Their valuable feedback enabled us to fine-tune the curriculum, culminating in a finalized product. Looking ahead to SFY2025, CTDHP remains committed to fostering connections with younger adults through expanded social media outreach and continued oral health education through the adolescent based curriculum.

CTDHP'S PLANNED ACTIONS 2023-2025

Targeted Population

TOLLAND, WINDHAM and NEW LONDON COUNTIES

Members living in rural areas have different experiences navigating the oral health delivery system.

PLANNED ACTION: Enhance our Member engagement campaigns, creatively targeting the population beyond transit-based advertising.

Our transit advertising is always successful in getting a high number of impressions. In order to build on SFY 2023's transit and geofencing campaign in New London County, we implemented the following strategy:

Digital Ads in Hyper-Local PATCH Publications:

Digital ads ran for 6-months in 10 municipalities through April 30. Seven of the 10 municipalities were located in these counties. They included:

- Ellington-Somers
- New London
- Norwich
- Stafford-Willington
- Vernon
- Waterford



The other municipalities were identified as low-utilization regions and were located in New Haven County: Wallingford; Milford and Hamden.

This HUSKY Health advertising campaign in the PATCH publications significantly outperformed industry averages this year as well as those from prior campaigns. The campaign had a .2% click through rate from 802,544 views, and 1,621 clicks in the first 5 months of the campaign which is:

- considerably higher than the Industry Average (Healthcare) of .05%
- higher than all PATCH advertising of .15%, that includes highly local advertisers that generally perform best.

There were four ads in the campaign that incorporated suggestions from the CT HUSKY Health Member Advisory Group when asked to 2023's messaging to what they thought their peers might respond to. The successful performance can be attributed to their input.

CTDHP'S PLANNED ACTIONS 2023-2025

Targeted Population

TOLLAND, WINDHAM and NEW LONDON COUNTIES - continued

Members living in rural areas have different experiences navigating the oral health delivery system.

PLANNED ACTION: Implement more HUSKY Dental Pop-Up Resource Centers in the region.

To bridge the gap with the HUSKY Health population in rural areas, CTDHP incorporated community engagement via its Pop-up resource initiative. This effort facilitated direct, one-on-one interactions between Community Engagement Specialists and HUSKY Health Members, offering personalized oral health education and the convenience of scheduling immediate appointments with dental offices on-site. CTDHP conducted seven Pop-up resource centers in the Tolland, Windham, and New London Counties. More efforts are underway for SFY2025.

Our Community Engagement Specialist in the Eastern Region of Connecticut conducted 565 outreach activities in the region in SFY2023 and as of print 399 in SFY2024.

A sample of the diverse community-based organizations that were reached include: Tolland Town Senior Center, North Central Area on Aging, Quinebaug Valley Community College, Jewish Federation of Eastern Connecticut, Ledyard Food Pantry, EASTCONN Head Start, and Killingly Public Library and these that took place in January. Schedules are posted on ctdhp.org each month.

January 2	VERNON	1pm-2pm	HUSKY Dental Pop Up Resource Center	Park West Apartments, 24 Terrace Dr.
January 3	NEW LONDON	11:30am-1:30pm	HUSKY Dental Pop Up Resource Center	New London Community Meal Center, 12 Montauk Ave.

CTDHP'S PLANNED ACTIONS 2023-2025

Targeted Population

MEN

Adults and children who identify as male utilize dental services less than those who identify as female.

PLANNED ACTION: Target media campaigns to the male demographic. Partner with community-based men's health and wellbeing programs and groups. Focus messaging on oral health behaviors and skills to men.

Digital advertising messaging and imagery is addressing this disparity in SFY24. We also conducted a Social Media A/B Test in December using select audience criteria that are more likely to be associated with males.

The test ran the same general post "Got HUSKY? You Have Dental Benefits. Post A went to - General interests for Men (19-29) vs more niched interests that include industries. All posts were boosted to 18-29 year old men:



POST A:

People who match:

Interests: Small business, Comics, Magazines, Construction, Books, Health care, Writing, Retail, Drawing, Agriculture, Photography or Men's clothing, Education level: High school grad, Some college, Associate degree or Some high school

POST B:

People who match:

Interests: Concerts, Music, Baseball, Bars, American football, College basketball or YouTube, Education level: High school grad, Some college, Associate degree or Some high school

With this test, it turned out there was little difference in engagement between the two groups, but post A, had a higher reach. More planned AB tests and boosts to adults are planned for SFY 2025.

CTDHP'S PLANNED ACTIONS 2023-2025

Targeted Population

MEN - *continued*

To address this disparity in SFY25, we will proactively strategize outreach initiatives targeting this demographic and to focus messaging on oral health behaviors and skills to men. This involves identifying relevant well-being programs and groups for targeted engagement.

Additionally, we will continued to enhance our social media messaging channels to amplify our efforts in reaching and engaging with this population.

Through these multifaceted approaches, we aim to assist in bridging the gap in dental service utilization and promote oral health equity for all individuals, regardless of gender identity.



CTDHP'S PLANNED ACTIONS 2023-2025

Targeted Population

THE ASIAN COMMUNITY

Asian adults and children consistently underutilize dental services.

PLANNED ACTION: Partner with and learn from Asian Pacific Islander (API) community-based groups about barriers to care.

To ensure our teams at CTDHP are well-equipped to serve the Asian Pacific Islander (API) population effectively, we partnered with Angela Rola, founding director of the Asian American Cultural Center at the University of Connecticut, and Adora Du, an Asian American mental health clinician and researcher from FAUNA, a non-profit organization promoting mental health awareness and resources for Asian and BIPOC communities, for a cultural competency training session. This training provided invaluable insights into the needs and nuances of the API community.

Moving forward, as we continue our efforts to reach out to Asian adults and children who underutilize dental services, we are planning to collaborate closely with API organizations. This collaboration will involve inventorying community partners that specialize in serving the API community.

PLANNED ACTION: Ensure CTDHP materials are translated and available in languages spoken in the API community.

Additionally, we will identify the most prevalent languages spoken within the API community to ensure that CTDHP's member-based educational materials are inclusive and accessible to the community. By fostering these partnerships and addressing linguistic needs, we aim to enhance our outreach efforts and better serve the oral health needs of the API population.



CTDHP'S PLANNED ACTIONS 2023-2025

Targeted Population

THE ASIAN COMMUNITY - *continued*

PLANNED ACTION: Co-locate Oral Health Navigation within CT's refugee resettlement agencies to support new arrivals and provide tools and resources to resettlement staff.

CTDHP has forged a collaborative partnership with Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services (IRIS), a program dedicated to offering comprehensive wrap-around services utilizing a strength-based assessment model for successful refugee resettlement integration.

Our objective at CTDHP is to provide Oral Health Navigation services to new arrivals by equipping resettlement staff with oral health tools and resources. In SFY23, 65 IRIS members were able to receive Oral Health Navigation services. To solidify this commitment, we have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with IRIS, exploring the possibility of co-locating Oral Health Navigation Services.

Moving forward, we will continue our collaboration with the Department of Social Services to actualize this initiative. Furthermore, the team at CTDHP has provided training to over 50 IRIS staff and refugees enrolled in the Family Literacy Program, on CTDHP services and Oral Health education, and has undergone training provided by IRIS to better understand their services and the unique needs of the population they serve, ensuring that they are well-prepared to offer effective support.



CTDHP'S PLANNED ACTIONS 2023-2025

Targeted Population

Black / African American Children

PLANNED ACTION: Deepen relationships with Head Start Programs.

CTDHP has taken proactive steps to improve oral health and access to dental benefits information for Black / African American children by partnering with Early Head Start programs. These programs serve pregnant women and families with children under three and between three and five years old.

In 2023, CTDHP Community Engagement Specialists conducted 136 outreach activities with Early Head Start Programs and successfully secured 23 Memorandums of Understanding. These agreements grant the programs access to oral health member utilization data, empowering the Head Start programs to tailor services to help close the gap in oral health disparities within the Black African / American community.

PLANNED ACTION: Execute a Memorandum of Understanding with the Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) Program with the CT Department of Public Health.

CTDHP has fostered a strong partnership with the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program, facilitated by our Community Engagement Specialist's dedicated outreach initiatives, which have included delivering oral health education and training to WIC staff. In ongoing efforts to enhance this collaboration, CTDHP in collaboration with DSS drafted and submitted a Memorandum of Understanding to the Department of Public Health's WIC program.



WIC plays a crucial role in providing essential support services such as supplemental foods, healthcare referrals, nutrition education, and breastfeeding support to low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, as well as infants and children up to age five who are identified as being at nutritional risk.

CTDHP'S PLANNED ACTIONS 2023-2025

Targeted Population

Black / African American Children - *continued*

Through this partnership, we aim to further integrate oral health education and support into the comprehensive services offered by WIC, promoting a holistic wellbeing among the communities we serve and to enable data collection of oral health utilization among the HUSKY Health population utilizing WIC services to identify areas of opportunity to improve connecting Members to dental care.

PLANNED ACTION: Engage with the Office of Early Childhood to explore partnerships to support screening and referrals to dental homes for children and parents.

CTDHP and Office of Early Childhood's (OEC's) Home Visiting Division's collaboration began in January 2023 with a Needs Assessment Report crafted by UConn MPH Advisee, Isha Sinojia for her Spring capstone project, advised by Paulina Lopez, Community Engagement Specialist at CTDHP. The needs assessment (survey) taken by OEC's Home Visiting (HV) staff assessed the current state needs, and capacity of early childhood home visiting programs to integrate better oral health habits and oral health literacy among the families they service.

The Home Visiting Division at OEC consists of 45 Home Visiting Programs and offers five different types of evidenced based home visiting programs. Each type is designed to meet the unique needs of the 3,000 families with young children served per year. The programs improve the health of young children by providing support and services for them and their families, right in their own homes.



CTDHP'S PLANNED ACTIONS 2023-2025

Targeted Population

Black / African American Children - *continued*

The majority of families enrolled in HV programs are HUSKY Health members and in partnership with OEC, we aim to ensure that all members have equitable access to oral health services and understood the importance of good oral health. We are continuing new conversation for SFY25 to train all family visitors and to execute a Memorandum of Understanding for data sharing.

CTDHP's Support:

- CTDHP conducted virtual training for all HV providers focused on CTDHP's mission and services, and shared prenatal, infant, and child oral health education.
- Oral Health Education Train the Trainer Breakout session at OEC's HV Conference December 2023.

CTDHP developed an oral health curriculum (fig.4) that will equip home visitors with integrating better oral health habits and increasing oral health literacy among the families they service. The curriculum will be taught to the 45 HV programs by CTDHP's Community Engagement Specialists by December 31, 2024.

Audience	Office of Early Childhood Staff Target Audience: Home Visiting Program Staff
Learning Objectives	By the end of the workshop... 1. Participants will confidently communicate, to their clients, at least three key benefits of maintaining good oral health during pregnancy. 2. Participants will incorporate hands-on demonstrations during home visits to ensure parents/guardians follow proper toothbrushing techniques. 3. Participants will provide information on the importance of dental check-ups and assist in scheduling appointments during home visits. 3A. Discussion: How can we be best partners?
Actions	1. Three talking points that highlight the importance of oral health during pregnancy 2. Demonstration / Activities: Recommended Books, Reward System Example, Toothbrush & Toothpaste Timeline, Practice teeth brushing with dry erase marker and toothbrushes 3. Register to become a Community Partner & Help Members find a Dentist 4. CES to develop relationship with home visiting program
Tools and Materials Needed	• Talking Points & Tips to Use on Home Visits Page • Toothbrush & Toothpaste Timeline Kit • Dry Erase Marker & Toothbrush Activity • Brochures, General Referral Pads, OB Referral Pads, QR Code cards with brushing and flossing tips online • Prenatal Oral Health Educational Materials

CTDHP'S PLANNED ACTIONS 2023-2025

Targeted Population

Black / African American Children - *continued*

PLANNED ACTION: Listen and learn from Black African American parents about dental anxiety and phobia to develop interventions.

As highlighted in CTDHP's 2023 Oral Health Equity Report, the intergenerational transmission of dental fear, anxiety, and trauma may contribute significantly to dental anxiety and phobia among Black/African American children. To enhance our ability to develop effective interventions aimed at educating families on coping mechanisms for dental anxiety and phobia in SFY25, we are prioritizing a proactive approach.

Specifically, we will address this concern by engaging with the Community Health Networks Member Advisory Board, providing a platform to listen to and learn from Black/African American parents. Through these discussions, we aim to gain valuable insights and perspectives that will inform the development of tailored interventions. Additionally, we are committed to exploring further partnerships to ensure a comprehensive and culturally sensitive approach to addressing oral health disparities within the Black/African American community.



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

The Connecticut Dental Health Partnership made the following seven policy recommendations to the Department of Social Services for consideration from the 2023 Oral Health Equity Report. The following grid outlines the statuses of the policy recommendations from the report. One of the seven is actively in progress.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS		
Have they been enacted?	Yes	No
Increase Adult Reimbursement Rates to be in parity with Children's Rates.		X
Implement an Enhanced Dental Home payment model.		X
Identify the needs of mobile and school-based dental programs statewide and specifically in Windham, Tolland, and New London counties.	X Partial*	
Revisit Dental Therapy to improve rural oral health care access and delivery.		X
Expand the Access to Baby Care (ABC) Program to older children and adults in new settings.		X
Integrate Oral Health Care services within DSS care management models and waiver programs.		X
Revitalize Connecticut's Oral Health Policy Coalitions.		X

- *Partially enacted. CTDHP was requested by DSS to develop a survey of mobile/portable dental providers across the state including the rural counties. This survey was completed in June 2024 and submitted to DSS. Further work is needed to learn about school based dental programs.*

The HUSKY Health Community is diverse. So are our services to them. At the Connecticut Dental Health Partnership, we are committed to serving the diverse HUSKY Health Member population. We embrace inclusivity and strive to provide culturally competent services that meet the unique needs of individuals from various backgrounds.

Our approach ensures that every Member receives personalized support and access to resources that empower them to reach their utmost oral health potential.



2024 Connecticut Medicaid Oral Health Equity

The Connecticut Dental Health Partnership is the Dental Plan for HUSKY Health and is administered by BeneCare Dental Plans under a contract with the Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS).

Our mission is to enable all HUSKY Health members to achieve and maintain good oral health. We work to ensure all members have equitable access to oral health services.

FOLLOW UP REPORT

JUNE 2024
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