

Policy Research in Action

What Research for CDOs?

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Research Brief

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State-Level Costs of Removing Fluoride from Community Water Systems

Authors: Debra...

Key Message

Decades of research have shown that removing fluoride from community water systems is a costly and ineffective way to improve oral health. The ADA supports the continued use of community water fluoridation as a safe and effective way to prevent tooth decay.

Introduction

Addressing chronic oral health issues is a priority for the dental community. Fluoride is a natural component of tooth enamel and plays a critical role in preventing tooth decay. Community water fluoridation is a proven, cost-effective way to ensure that all Americans have access to fluoride. The ADA supports the continued use of community water fluoridation as a safe and effective way to prevent tooth decay.

In-state First Year Students at U.S. Dental Schools, 1974 to 2024

Using data from the CODA's Annual Survey of Dental Education, we examined in-state first year students over the last 50 years to get a general sense of how far students will travel to attend dental school and how this has changed over time.

Looking at Percentages

By state, most saw a decline in in-state dental students from 1974 to 2024. Among the 33 states that had a dental school at the beginning of this period, 28 experienced a decrease in their percentage of in-state first year dental students.

Guest Editorial

Make America Healthy Again

What it could mean for oral health

Brett H. Kessler, DDS; Richard J. Rosato, DMD

The Economic Rationale for a Global Commitment to Invest in Oral Health

White Paper

MAY 2024

World Economic Forum

JAMA Health Forum.

Original Investigation

Benefit Design and Access to Dental Care Among Seniors With Medicare Advantage Dental Benefits

Kamran Nasseh, PhD; Asha Singhal, BDS, MPH; PhD; Marko Vujacic, PhD; Lisa Simon, MD, DMD

Economic Impact of Dental Offices in the United States

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\$478 billion

ANNUAL ECONOMIC IMPACT GENERATED BY DENTAL OFFICES

\$2.4 million

AVERAGE ANNUAL ECONOMIC IMPACT PER DENTIST PER YEAR

2.5 million jobs

IN THE U.S. ECONOMY EACH YEAR

1 = 1.4

EVERY JOB IN A DENTAL OFFICE GENERATES 1.4 ADDITIONAL JOBS IN OTHER SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY

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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.
Millions of Americans Are Skipping the Dentist. Lenders See a Financing Niche.



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Economic outlook panel

HPI's Economic Outlook and Emerging Issues in Dentistry tracks dentists' perspectives.

 [Landing page](#)

Dental care market

Publications on dental care utilization and expenditures across the U.S.

 [Landing page](#)

Dental practice research

Research on dental practice modality, dentists' earnings and reimbursement trends.

 [Landing page](#)

The dentist workforce

Trends in the current and future supply of dentists and Dentist Demographics Dashboard.

 [Landing page](#)

Dental education

Dental student demographic trends and other data on CODA-accredited dental education

 [Landing page](#)

Coverage, access & outcomes

Research on dental benefits, access and barriers to care, and oral health outcomes.

 [Landing page](#)

Oral Health is Health



HEALTH AND HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS

Investing in oral health: Here’s why the time is now

Aug 5, 2024



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Vice President, Public Policy, Henry Schein

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Colgate-Palmolive Company

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Economic Forum

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- Oral diseases affect nearly half the world’s population, posing significant risks to individual health and systemic illnesses and contributing to substantial economic costs and productivity losses globally.
- There is growing recognition of the importance of oral health, highlighted by the adoption of the World Health Organization’s global strategy on oral health in 2022 and several leading on broader public health integration.
- There is a critical need for increased investment from public and private sectors to improve oral health and address affordability, accessibility and advancement.

HEALTH AND HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS

Half the world is affected by oral disease – here’s how we can tackle this unmet healthcare need

May 23, 2024



Charlotte Edmond
Senior Writer, Forum Agenda

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OUR IMPACT
What’s the World Economic
Forum doing to [accelerate
action on Health and
Healthcare Systems?](#)

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- Oral diseases affect 1 billion more people than many other major diseases combined.
- An estimated \$710 billion a year is spent on oral treatment costs and productivity losses.
- Healthcare systems need to invest in oral health and it’s disproportionately affecting the world’s most vulnerable people, says a [new report](#) from the World Economic Forum.

Economic Impact of Cutting Dental Coverage



*Removing adult dental benefits in all states would increase health care costs by **\$1.9B** each years.*

*It will also limit the job prospects for **2M** low-income adults in the US.*

Economic Impact of Cutting Water Fluoridation

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Research Brief

State-Level Costs of Removing Fluoride from Community Water Systems

Authors: Deesha Bhaumik, PhD; Rebecca Starkel Weninger, PhD

The Health Policy Institute (HPI) is a thought leader and trusted source for policy knowledge on critical issues affecting the U.S. dental care system. HPI strives to generate, synthesize, and disseminate innovative research for policy makers, oral health advocates, and dental care providers.

Who We Are

HPI's interdisciplinary team of health economists, statisticians, and analysts has extensive expertise in health systems policy research. HPI staff routinely collaborates with researchers in academia and policy think tanks.

Contact Us

Contact The Health Policy Institute for more information on products and services at hpi@ada.org or call 312.440.2928.

Key Messages

- Decades of scientific evidence show that community water fluoridation (CWF) is a safe and effective means of preventing tooth decay, especially among children. Despite continued recommendation of fluoridated water from health organizations, several states are considering banning CWF based on guidance from the federal government.
- The estimated five-year costs associated with removing fluoride from community water systems in the U.S. is \$46 billion.
- Removing fluoride from community water systems – especially if combined with a ban on fluoride supplements – would not only deal a major blow to the nation's oral health, but would also entail major economic costs.

Introduction

Addressing chronic conditions and promoting preventive health are priorities under the current administration's Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) platform.^{1,2} However, policies recently implemented under the MAHA program directly challenge established public health measures meant to promote oral health among the U.S. population. Most notably, fluoride is under threat of being removed from community water systems despite decades of scientific evidence supporting its safety and effectiveness in preventing tooth decay among those that consume it.^{3,4}

Fluoride is a naturally occurring mineral found in water, soil, plants and some foods and is most known for its oral health benefits.⁵ Fluoride strengthens teeth through remineralization of the tooth enamel, protecting against and even reversing tooth decay.⁶ While fluoride is naturally occurring, it does not occur or is not accessible at the optimal level, 0.7 milligrams per liter, in every community water source.⁷ Additionally, targeted in-office fluoride treatments and even basic oral hygiene products like fluoridated toothpaste may be

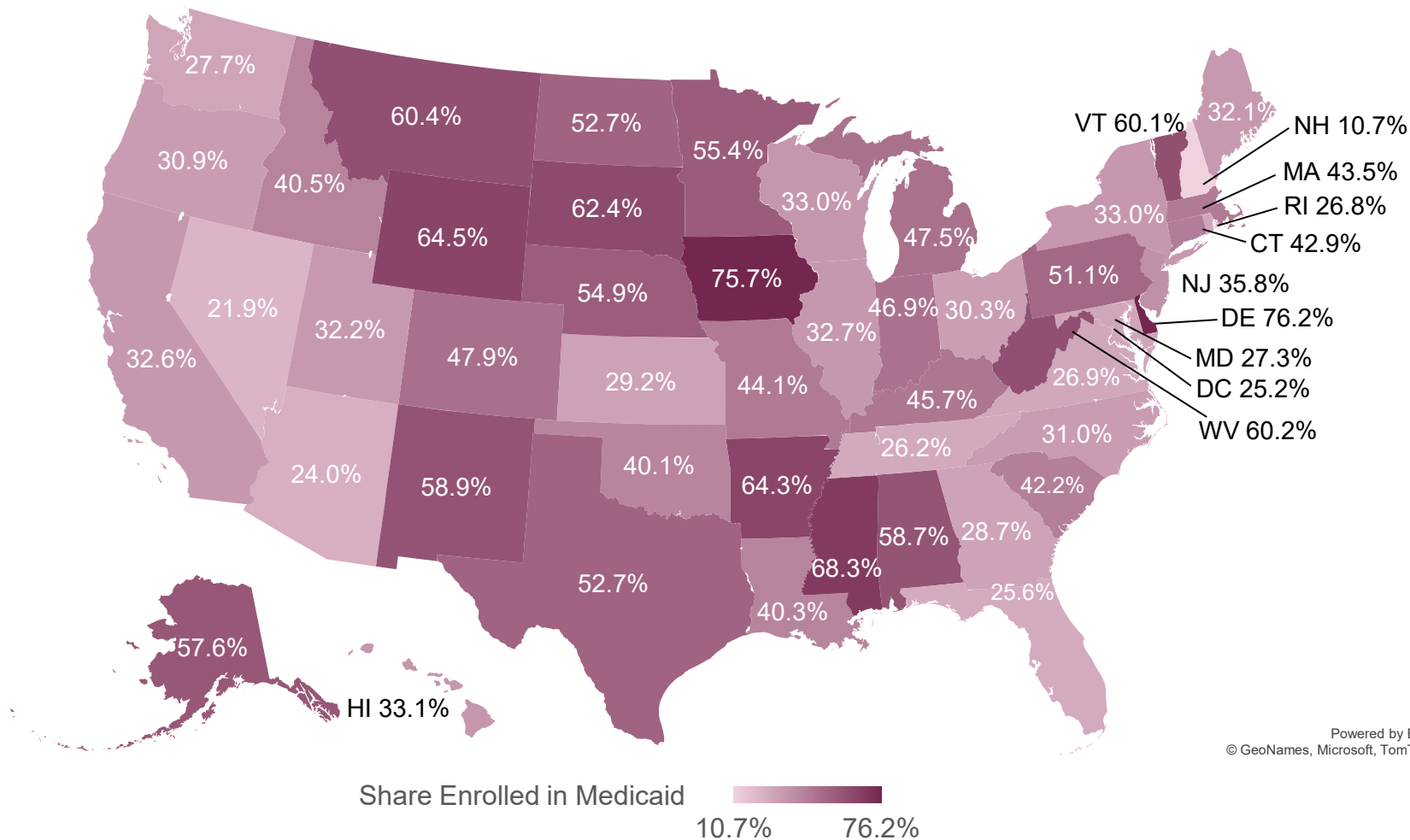
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July 2025

*Eliminating community water fluoridation in the US would increase health care costs by **\$46B** over 5 years.*

Wide Variation in Medicaid Participation by State

Share of Dentists Enrolled as Medicaid Providers, 2024



- The share of dentists enrolled in Medicaid varies by state, ranging from 10.7% in New Hampshire to 76.2% in Delaware.
- Enrollment does not necessarily mean all dentists actively treat Medicaid patients.

Oral Health Workforce Policy

Data and Trends

Dentists Who Participate in Medicaid: Who They Are, Where They Locate, How They Practice

Medical Care Research and Review
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Kamyar Nasseh¹ , Chelsea Fosse¹, and Marko Vujicic¹,

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Health
Economics WILEY

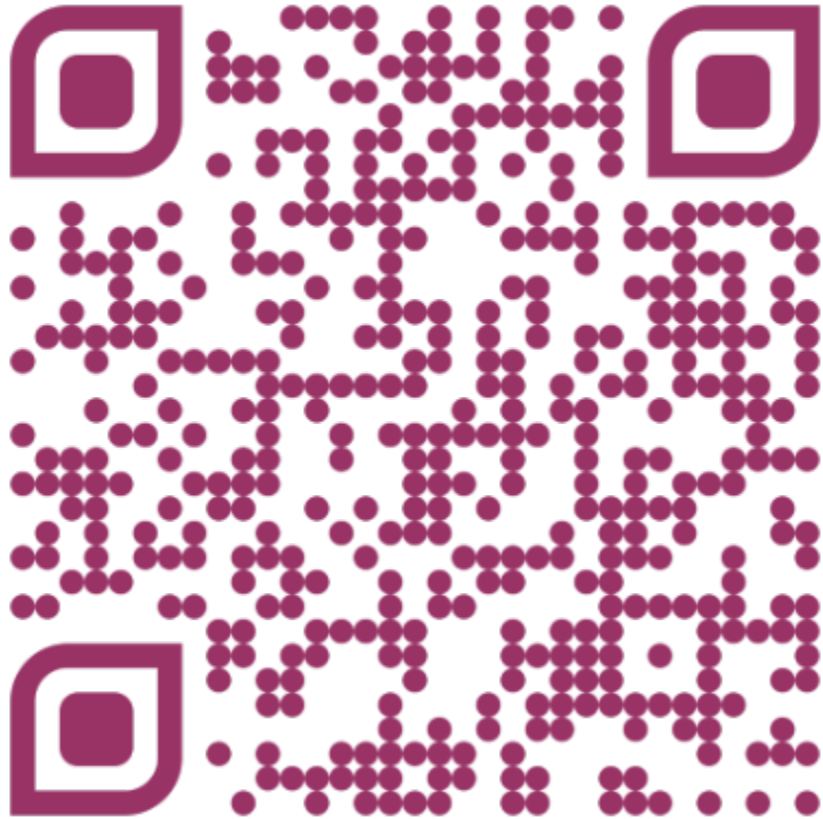
How do dental practices respond to changes in scope of practice regulations?

Kamyar Nasseh¹  | John R. Bowblis² | Coady Wing³

What Analysis Would be Helpful?



Thank you!



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