

The Coalition of Texans with Disabilities (CTD) invites your organization to go on record in support of public policy to add a dental benefit to Texas Medicaid for adults with disabilities.

The issue:

More than 400,000 adult Texans in Medicaid receive **little to no dental services**. When these individuals have dental pain, their only option is the emergency room. Plus, poor oral health is linked to **serious chronic conditions**, like heart disease, malnutrition, hypertension, and diabetes. A dental benefit would not only improve the oral and overall health outcomes of this population, but also make better use of public funds. Medicaid adults with disabilities in institutions and community waiver programs have access to a dentist. Those in non-waiver community programs or on an interest list do not.

History of legislation:

CTD has been the lead organization on the issue. In 2017, legislation passed to study the issue. In 2019, legislation passed to further analyze dental services and to conduct a pilot program, scheduled to begin in late 2021. The pilot would provide a comprehensive dental package to a small number of recipients and would run for two years. While this is good news, this means the earliest the Legislature could consider implementing a program would be 2025. **Proposed legislation in 2021 would add a preventive dental benefit** (exams, cleaning, cavity repairs, for example). The American Dental Association reports that “almost all Emergency Room and hospital visits could be prevented in a dental clinic”. This would not conflict with the more extensive dental pilot.

Supporting organizations:

38 organizations are currently on record in support of this legislation, including professional groups representing doctors, hospitals, dentists, managed care organizations, statewide disability advocacy organizations such as CTD, ADAPT, the Arc of Texas and Texas Advocates and numerous smaller and regional disability organizations. CTD now invites your organization to add to our supporters, knowing that a long list will help us to get the attention of legislators.

Responsibilities of supporting organizations:

CTD will keep you informed and let you know of opportunities to advocate to your legislators, though you would be under no obligation to do so. The name of your organization will appear on materials we will distribute. There is no financial contribution.

To sign on as a supporting organization:

Email how you want your organization to be listed and the name and email of a contact person to dborel@txdisabilities.org Send questions to the same email.

THANK YOU FOR HELPING TO MAKE A HEALTHIER TEXAS!