

# Frequently Asked Questions about **Proposition 56** Payments for Medi-Cal Dental



## What is Prop 56 and why does it matter?

Passed by California voters in 2016, Proposition 56 raised the state's tobacco tax with some of the tax revenue going to increased Medi-Cal Dental reimbursement rates, in some cases by 40% or more. Since Prop 56 dental payments have been in effect, the state has seen nearly a 40% increase in provider enrollment in Medi-Cal.

The state is facing a large fiscal deficit and is proposing, among other health care cuts, to eliminate Prop 56 dental payments to help balance the budget. This cut was initially proposed in 2025,

but the California Legislature delayed the cut by one year. If included in the state budget in June, the change would go into effect July 1, 2026. If these proposed cuts take effect, Medi-Cal Dental rates will revert to levels from the 1990s. A [new survey](#) conducted by CDA found that the proposed cuts would lead to devastating impacts for California dentists, requiring them to disenroll from Medi-Cal completely, see fewer Medi-Cal patients or even close offices. Fewer dentists would lead to decreased access to care for Medi-Cal patients.

## How is CDA fighting these proposed cuts?

- CDA has convened the [Save Our Dental Care coalition](#) of more than 80 groups focused on fighting these proposed Medi-Cal cuts.
- CDA has been meeting regularly with legislators, state administration and federal health care agencies to share how devastating these cuts would be to the provider and patient community.
- CDA's [survey](#) showed nearly half of Medi-Cal dentists would leave the program, and 30% would see fewer patients if the proposed cuts take effect.

## How can members take action?

1. [Contact Your Legislator](#)  
Send an email directly to your state legislators using the sample message provided.
2. [Share Your Story](#)  
Dentists, patients and coalition members can use this form to share how the proposed cuts will impact them personally. Short submissions are sufficient. CDA may contact you for additional details to put these stories to best use in our advocacy.
3. [Printable Flyer](#)  
Help us spread the word by printing and displaying the coalition flyer so more people can join our campaign. A QR code on the flyer will connect patients directly to legislators.

CDA will share additional advocacy opportunities throughout the spring. These efforts are strategically timed to help influence decision-making. Members can expect to receive these action alerts in the Inside California Dentistry newsletter, on CDA's social media channels and via CDA text alerts.

Please review your [email subscription preferences](#) and make sure you're subscribed to CDA [text alerts](#) to receive communications, like these important alerts, from CDA.



## **Will these cuts impact services for children?**

Yes. The proposed Medi-Cal rate cuts will impact most dental services for children and adults. So far, the current [CalAIM dental incentives](#) focused on services for children have not been challenged.

## **Do we know what the proposed rate changes will be?**

Yes. View the proposed [Medi-Cal base rates](#) and the current [CalAIM incentives](#).

## **What is the timeline? When will we know if the Prop 56 cut will happen?**

The governor must release his revised budget in mid-May, reflecting any changes in state tax revenue and economic forecasts. The Legislature must pass a balanced budget by June 15, which will include the final determination of whether any Medi-Cal Dental cuts will take effect for the new fiscal year that starts on July 1, 2026.

## **Are adult dental services going away?**

Under the proposed budget, Medi-Cal coverage of adult dental services is preserved for most individuals. However, adult dental benefits are being eliminated for individuals with unsatisfactory immigration status (the undocumented population).

## **How are current advocacy efforts going? Do you think Prop 56 will be saved?**

CDA is doing everything possible to prevent these cuts. Saving Medi-Cal dental funding is a top priority but also a very serious challenge given the overall state budget. This effort requires all of us, so we urge you to use our [Take Action center](#) so we can help amplify your voices to legislators.

## **What other changes are happening with Medi-Cal Dental?**

As of Jan. 1, 2026, individuals with unsatisfactory immigration status can no longer enroll for full-scope Medi-Cal with dental benefits. Beginning July 1, 2026, adults with unsatisfactory immigration status will no longer have access to Medi-Cal Dental benefits beyond emergency services. For more details on Medi-Cal changes related to immigration status, please see updates from the [California Department of Health Care Services](#).

## **I have additional questions about the proposed cuts to Medi-Cal Dental.**

### **Who can I contact?**

Members are welcome to email additional questions related to the proposed Medi-Cal Dental cuts to: [publicaffairs@cda.org](mailto:publicaffairs@cda.org).