



Children Now



Western Dental®  
& Orthodontics



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## **Broad and Diverse Coalition of 50+ Groups Call on State Legislature and Newsom Administration to Stop Devastating \$1B Cuts to Medi-Cal Dental**

*Coalition to Save Our Dental Care brings dozens of providers, labor and workforce advocates, and children's advocacy organizations together urging lawmakers to stop the cuts that will impact millions of Californians*

**SACRAMENTO, CA** - Ahead of the unveiling of the 2026-2027 state budget, more than 50 groups have joined together in support of preserving essential dental care across the state. Last year, lawmakers stayed a \$1 billion cut to the program for one year, but one third of funding for the Medi-Cal Dental program is set to be eliminated on July 1, 2026, which would bring the program to 1990s funding levels and would have catastrophic impacts on millions of patients.

Dental funding makes up just 1.5% of Medi-Cal program funding, but is facing 15% of Medi-Cal budget cuts. These cuts also leave federal matching funds on the table, costing California approximately \$576 million.

California would drop to the 48th lowest Medicaid dental reimbursement rates for children in the country.

“In 2016, voters overwhelmingly approved Proposition 56, which increased funding for Medi-Cal Dental and led to a historic expansion in access to care for millions of patients,” **said Dr. Robert Hanlon, president of the California Dental Association.** “These cuts are deeply harmful, incredibly disproportionate and defy the will of the voters. Lawmakers must treat dental care as essential health care and prevent these cuts from taking effect in the next budget.”

“Western Dental has been able to open dozens of offices and provide care to millions of patients since the enactment of Prop 56. That funding has translated to real care for those who need it most.,” **said Peter Truong, DDS, Chief Dental Officer, Western Dental.** “If the funding is eliminated as planned, many offices would be forced to evaluate their capacity, or even close, putting a strain on the state’s entire health care system.”

“More than half of the state’s children rely on Medi-Cal Dental for their care, which is considered essential primary care for school-aged children. Eliminating that care for the most vulnerable children puts them at risk for more school absences, increased illness and poor health outcomes that will lead to future disadvantages,” **said Eileen Espejo, Senior Managing**

**Director, Health, Children Now.** “Cuts to dental care access for kids should never have been part of budget negotiations. Lawmakers should take action to preserve dental care for children.”

A full list of the coalition is here:

- Alta CA Regional Center
- Association of Dental Support Organizations (ADSO)
- Blue Cloud Pediatric Surgery Centers
- Brite Smile Family Dentistry
- California Association of Dental Plans (CADP)
- California Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (CALOAMS)
- California Association of Orthodontists (CAO)
- California Association of Health Facilities (CAHF)
- California Dental Assistants Association
- California Dental Association (CDA)
- California Dental Hygienists Association (CDHA)
- California Hospital Association (CHA)
- California Medical Association (CMA)
- California Primary Care Association (CPCA)
- California Society of Pediatric Dentistry (CSPD)
- California School-Based Health Alliance (CSHA)
- CalPACE
- Cavity Free SF
- Children Now
- Children’s Specialty Care Coalition
- Dental Dreams
- Dientes Community Dental Care
- DentaQuest
- Family Voices of California
- First 5 Sacramento
- Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center
- Golden Age Dental Care
- Golden Gate Regional Center
- HealthNet
- HealthRIGHT 360
- Indio Surgery Center
- Jewish Vocational Services (JVS)
- LeadingAge California
- Liberty Dental Plan
- North LA County Regional Center
- North East Medical Services
- North Los Angeles County Regional Center
- Redwood Coast Regional Center (RCRC)
- Sacramento District Dental Society
- San Andreas Regional Center
- San Gabriel Pomona Regional Center
- San Francisco Children’s Dental
- SmileBuilders Children’s Dentistry
- The ARC of California
- Tri-Counties Regional Center
- Union of American Physician and Dentists (UADP)
- University of California, Office of the President (UCOP)
- University of the Pacific, Public Health Care Collaborative
- Valley Mountain Regional Center
- Western Dental
- Westside Regional Center