

## Oral Health Integration for MassHealth CPs

Starting in January 2020, MassHealth began linking payment to performance on a pediatric oral health quality measure. Integrating oral health into the broader health care system care can help ACOs improve their performance on the pediatric oral health quality measure, as well as lead to better management of chronic conditions and reduce costly Emergency Department (ED) visits.<sup>1</sup>



The **MassHealth LTSS CP Provider Oral Health Quality Measure** reports the percentage of LTSS CP members aged 3 to 20 who have received a comprehensive or periodic oral evaluation during the year.

### Why is integrating oral health into physical healthcare important for CPs?

- **Oral disease is more prevalent and severe in children and adolescents with disabilities.** The prevalence of dental decay and gum disease among individuals with disabilities aged 2-26 years old ranges from 80-90%.<sup>2</sup>
- **Additional oral health services may be needed for people requiring long-term medical care.** Intellectual, physical and/or behavioral disabilities can impair an individual's ability to self-care and complete daily activities such as brushing their teeth.<sup>3</sup>
- **Poor oral health can be costly.** Chronically untreated dental disease can result in expensive visits to hospital emergency departments which are often ill-equipped to appropriately manage underlying dental conditions.<sup>4</sup>

### Case Studies of Oral Health Integration

#### Providing Education through Community Health Workers

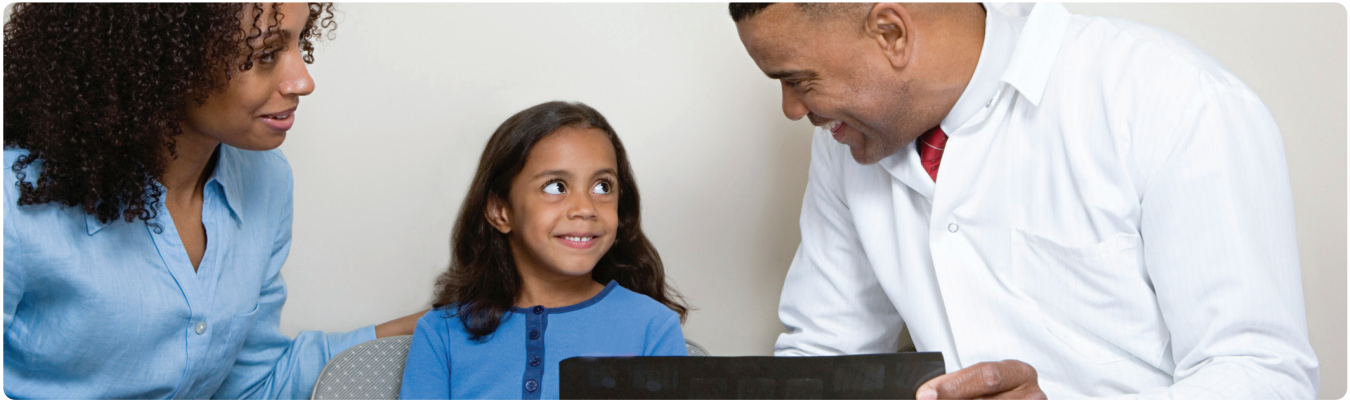
- Columbia University School of Public Health partnered with local dental providers to train Community Health Workers (CHWs) to conduct home visits and provide oral health education to families with children with early childhood tooth decay. CHWs were trained to provide in-home instruction to families about oral health and dental care best practices.



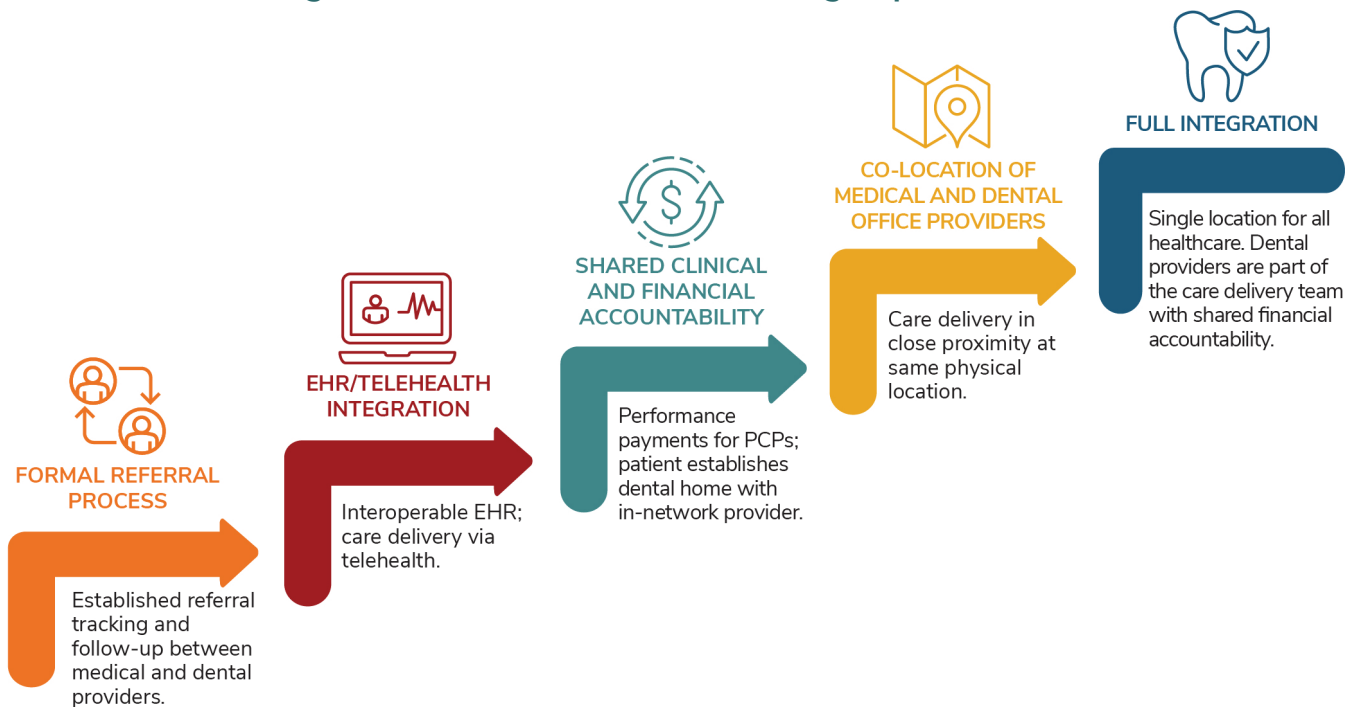
#### Expanding Oral Health Access through Public Health Dental Hygienist

- In Massachusetts, Public Health Dental Hygienists (PHDHs) are registered dental hygienists who provide preventive oral health services in a variety of public health settings such as schools, day care centers, nursing homes and long term care facilities utilizing portable dental equipment. Portable dental programs and PHDHs may collaborate with an array of community partners and community-based organizations to increase access to oral health and dental services for often-underserved communities and populations.





## Oral health care integration can take various forms along a spectrum from referrals



### Tools for Oral Health Integration



Consider partnerships with dental schools to establish referral relationships and even off-site patient monitoring. Examples: [Health Care for All Oral Health Integration Case Studies](#)



Opportunities for MassHealth ACOs to Improve Oral Health and Reduce Cost through Emergency Department Diversion. Examples: [UMass Policy Brief](#)



Tufts Dental Facilities (TDF) provides comprehensive dental care for adults and



children with developmental disabilities living in MA. For more information: [TDF website](#)



Train case managers on common oral health diagnoses and preventive treatments that can be offered in a community setting

Train and engage CHWs and CHW supervisors on oral health management. Examples: [Health Care for All Oral Health Integration Case Studies](#)

To find more information about MassHealth covered services for adults and children please visit here: [MassHealth Dental Benefits](#).

1. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, MassHealth is in discussions with CMS regarding adjustments to the CP quality measurement approach, which could impact when this measure becomes linked to payment for performance.
2. Kelly, G. (2020). How do intellectual disabilities affect oral health? Evidence-Based Dentistry, 21(1), 26-27.
3. Haumschild, M. S., & Haumschild, R. J. (2009). The importance of oral health in long-term care. Journal of the American Medical Directors Association, 10(9), 667-671.
4. Lutifiyya, M.N., Gross, A.J., Soffe, B. & Lipsky, M.S. (2019) Dental Care Utilization: Examining the associations between health service deficits and not having a dental visit in the past 12 months. BMC Public Health 19:265