

# DENTAL COVERAGE for Medicaid Expansion Beneficiaries

## VOTE YES on SB 2231

### DANGERS OF POOR ORAL HEALTH



Tooth Loss



Gum Disease



Diabetes



Mouth Cancer



Stroke  
Dementia



Bad Breath



Respiratory  
Infections



Heart Disease

Evidence connects healthy mouths with a healthy body, and insufficient dental coverage can negatively affect overall health.

Over  
**34,000**

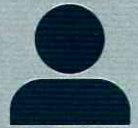
North Dakotans rely on Medicaid Expansion for their health care coverage. Today, they have NO dental coverage.



Individuals who report dental care affordability concerns miss more hours of work for unplanned dental care.



More than half of Indigenous adults reported no dental visit in the past five or more years.



Nearly 1 in 3 adults who are not Indigenous reported no dental visit in the past five or more years.

CHAD supports legislation to extend adult dental benefits to ALL North Dakota Medicaid recipients, including individuals covered by Medicaid Expansion.

"Increasing the number of insured patients adds resources to and strengthens the entire dental system. More covered patients would improve health centers' ability to pay competitive wages and bring high-quality dentists to our rural communities."

**SHELLY TEN NAPEL**

CEO, COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE ASSOCIATION OF THE DAKOTAS

### MISSION OF MERCY: A PICTURE OF UNMET NEED

**778**

North Dakotans received care at the Mission of Mercy event in Bismarck in October 2024. Hundreds lined up (some the night before) to receive free care from volunteer dentists and hygienists.

**66.9%**

had "no insurance" and couldn't afford dental care

**40%**

drove over an hour to attend

**40%**

reported having felt dental pain



**CHAD**

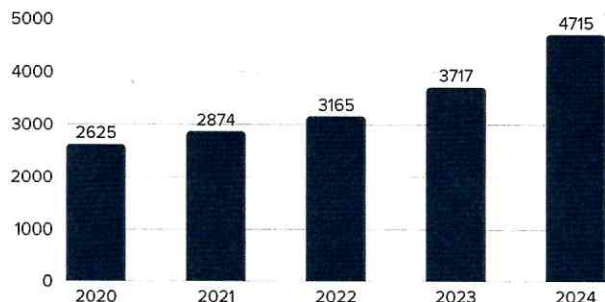
Community HealthCare Association of the Dakotas



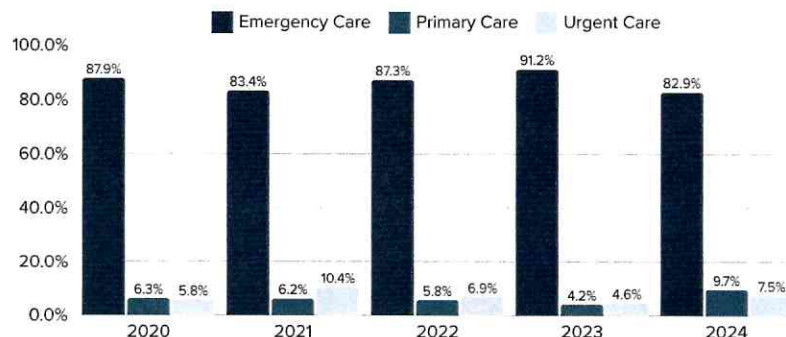
# THE HIDDEN COSTS OF NOT COVERING PREVENTATIVE DENTAL CARE

Lack of coverage causes many to delay care until there is a problem – leading to much costlier health risks and treatments.

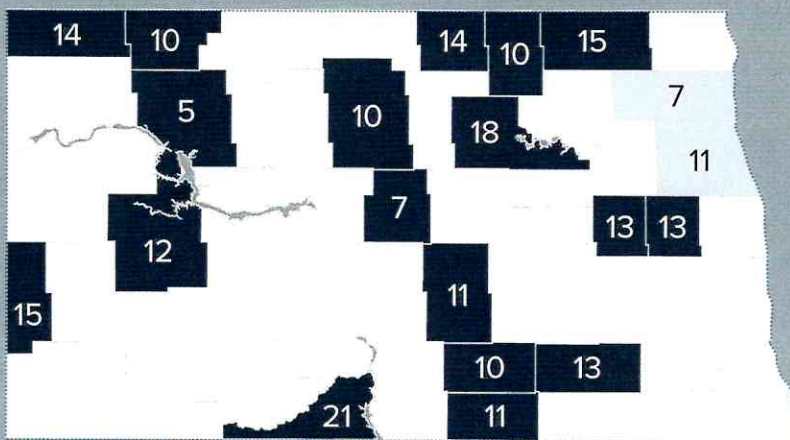
**Number of Tooth Pain Events by Year**  
North Dakota (2020-2024)



**Types of Visits Associated with Tooth Pain Events**  
North Dakota (2020-2024)



## UNCOMPENSATED CARE HINDERS DENTAL WORKFORCE GROWTH



- 31%** of dentists report accepting any and all Medicaid patients.
- 44%** of the need for dental providers is being met.
- 69** dental care health practitioner shortage areas (HPSAs) designated in the state, with a service area of **153,291** people

■ Geographic dental health professional shortage area  
■ Low-income population health professional shortage area

In 2023, Community Health Centers provided over

**25,600 dental visits**

in North Dakota, regardless of insurance status or ability to pay.

“Every week, hundreds of people attempt to schedule dental visits at our clinic. The demand far outweighs our current capacity. Incorporating oral health services into Medicaid Expansion would have an immediate impact at Spectra Health by creating sustainability in a challenging reimbursement environment.”

**MARA JIRAN**  
CEO, SPECTRA HEALTH

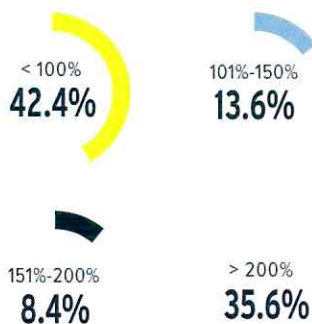


The financial strain of uncompensated dental care for Medicaid Expansion patients at health centers makes it even more difficult to grow their dental programs and workforce. Having more patients with coverage means that more care can be reimbursed, allowing health centers to invest in workforce growth and enhance access.

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on SB 2231



## PATIENTS BY POVERTY LEVEL

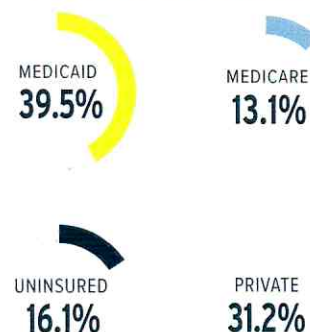


This represents a distribution of patients for whom income is known. Income is unknown for 47.0% of patients.

# TOTAL PATIENTS 36,376

**37.9%** of total patients served are people of color

## PATIENTS BY PAYOR SOURCE



## ECONOMIC VIABILITY

Source: Calculations based on 2023 UDS Reports

In addition to the actual dollars that flow to local communities through health centers, their role in maintaining access to health care can have an enormous impact on the long-term economic viability of rural and urban communities throughout North Dakota. For our smaller communities, access to local health care is crucial to a town's ability to recruit new companies and maintain a healthy workforce without long out-of-town trips to the doctors or to pick up prescriptions. When a small town is able to retain access to health care, it can serve as a main street anchor, keeping other small businesses viable. Across rural and urban communities, CHCs keep health care affordable by providing health care services regardless of ability to pay and by helping patients find health coverage options that are right for them.

## STATEWIDE IMPACT

North Dakota CHCs had a total annual economic impact on the state of

# \$101,966,207 IN 2023



## NORTH DAKOTA CHCs DIRECTLY GENERATED:

# 387

full-time jobs

AND SUPPORTED AN ADDITIONAL

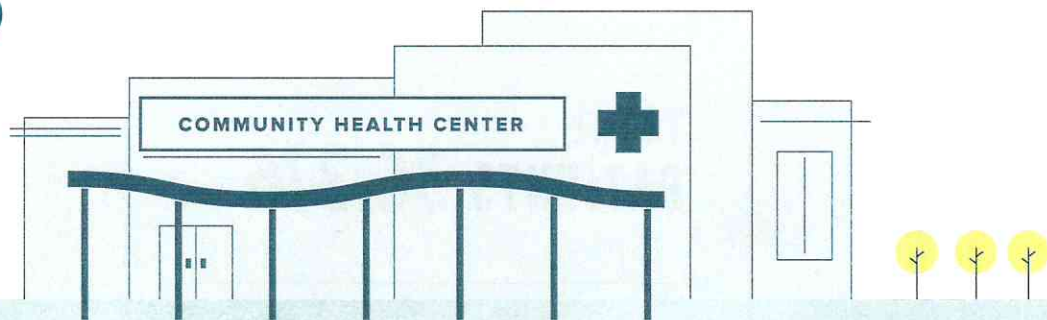
# 229

jobs in other business

# 616

total jobs





## WHAT IS A COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER?

Community health centers (CHCs) are non-profit, community-driven primary care clinics that provide high-quality primary and preventive care to all individuals, regardless of their insurance status or ability to pay. Health centers are located in underserved and low-income urban and rural areas across North Dakota, providing access to affordable, quality health care for those who need it most. The centers serve as essential medical homes where patients can receive a wide array of services including medical, behavioral, and dental care along with help with transportation, interpretation, and other case management and care coordination services. In rural communities, health centers support a community's ability to retain local health care options, supporting access to health care where rural Dakotans live and work. North Dakota's network of five health center organizations provides care to over 36,000 patients each year at 22 locations in 20 communities across North Dakota.

