



# How Vision and Dental Benefits Positively Impact Member Engagement and Health Outcomes

*What Medicaid members say about the importance of vision and dental benefits and how these supplemental benefits improve member health.*

## INTRODUCTION

When it comes to member care, it is important to adopt a whole health approach. Additional health benefits that are considered supplemental have the potential to improve healthcare outcomes and reduce costs. Providing additional benefits, like vision and dental, to members serves as a type of preventive care by uncovering early stages of various health problems and providing insight into certain disease states. This can help your health plan identify health concerns early-on to get members the care they need. After all, good health starts with prevention and thrives by eliminating barriers.

A focus on member wellness, rather than “sick care,” can help you eliminate avoidable care costs and improve lifelong member health and quality of life. Personalized supports that are designed to encourage and empower individuals to reach specific health goals, maintain good habits, and make lasting behavior change can enhance care and transform the health of your population. A fundamental step to improved population health is appropriate health benefits and access to care. The health experts at Envolve, an integrated healthcare solutions company, are pleased to share how supplemental health benefits positively impact member engagement and retention.

## BENEFITS OF PREVENTIVE CARE

Benefits that focus on a specific area of care, like vision and dental, can impact an individual’s entire wellbeing by encouraging them to take preventive steps in their healthcare, like completing annual eye exams or regular dental appointments.

Regular vision appointments are especially important for people with diabetes who are more likely to develop eye diseases, including glaucoma, cataracts, and diabetic retinopathy. Blindness caused by diabetic retinopathy is preventable in 90% of people through early discovery and treatment. However, more than 50% of those with diabetes don’t get routine eye exams or are diagnosed too late for effective treatment.

Dental appointments are also an effective means of preventive care and can uncover signs of certain disease states. During routine exams, dentists are able to detect signs of health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, kidney

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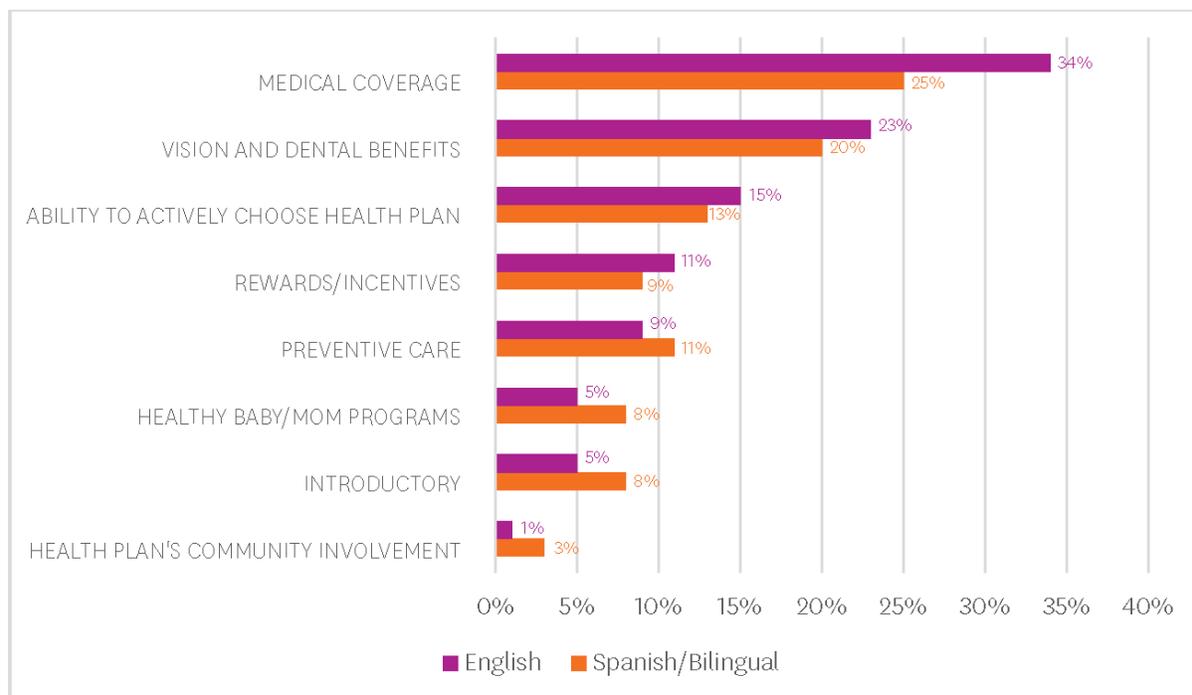
disease, and certain cancers. By scheduling annual appointments, members can address potential health concerns early and avoid emergency care. The CDC reports that each year nearly 34 million school hours and over \$45 billion in worker productivity is lost each year due to emergency dental care. A member with the proper dental or vision coverage is more likely to make health-conscious decisions and is twice as likely to visit their dentist regularly. This can help providers detect and treat potential health concerns early, resulting in healthier and happier individuals.

## ATTRACT AND RETAIN MEMBERS WITH SUPPLEMENTAL COVERAGE

For many members, dental and vision benefits are an important piece of their health coverage. In a recent proprietary research survey, 2,082 Medicaid members responded to aided and unaided multiple choice and open-ended questions regarding the topic of health coverage. One third of participants indicated that a health plan who offers dental and vision benefits is most appealing. Regardless of demographics, the preference for this additional coverage remains. In fact, for many people vision and dental is the most-requested health benefit after basic medical coverage and serves as a way to attract members.

The results of the research show which topics garnered the most interest from the surveyed Medicaid members. “Coverage,” referring to medical health insurance, was the most heavily-favored topic out of the nine topics provided, with vision and dental benefits ranking as the second highest-rated.

### What Appeals Most to Medicaid Members



## IMPROVED OVERALL MEMBER HEALTH THROUGH VISION & DENTAL

When members are able to make lasting behavior change through use of supplemental benefits, their overall health will improve. Access to vision and dental benefits allows people to be active participants in managing their own health, leading to true wellness. Providing supplemental benefits allows plans and members to have access to preventive health data to identify gaps in care and support healthy lifestyles through education and empowerment.



### Vision

Many people don't get the regular eye exams that they need. More than 45% of US adults haven't had a dilated eye exam in the past two years, even though common eye diseases, such as glaucoma, diabetic eye disease, and age-related macular degeneration, often show no warning signs. People also generally don't associate eye health with their overall health. However, standard eye exams are important for maintaining wellness and serve as one of the most effective ways to defend against vision loss and detect signs of certain long-term health conditions. Eye exams can uncover health information, including signs of serious conditions like diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, thyroid diseases, and certain types of cancers. Plus, eye doctors are often the first to discover signs of abnormal health conditions. Uncovering disease state potential can help catch health concerns early, meaning less hospitalization and lower spend on medications. Encouraging members to take care of their eyes can help your plan decrease diagnostic claim costs, improve member health, and enhance quality of life.



### Dental

In conjunction with proper daily oral hygiene, regular dental appointments can help members maintain healthy teeth, gums, and tongue. Oral health can also greatly impact your overall health, in fact, dentists can identify symptoms of many different diseases through regular dental exams. Poor dental care has also been linked to various chronic health problems including cancer, heart disease, and diabetes, and insufficient oral health has been found to worsen certain health conditions such as Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis, and endocarditis. In addition to early diagnosis for certain health conditions, annual dental visits allow for professional cleaning, treatment, and education to help prevent additional problems including cavities and gum disease. Plus, proper dental care can reduce heart disease, asthma, and minimize adverse pregnancy outcomes. Comprehensive dental care starts with education and results in healthier members and reduced plan administrative costs.

## SOLUTION

You can reduce costs and improve member health with the right partner providing supplemental health benefits for your plan, including vision and dental. These benefits along with education and empowerment will encourage good health habits, attract and retain members, and improve the health of your population, one person at a time.

## KEY FINDINGS

- 1 A focus on member wellness can help your plan reduce costs and improve member health.
- 2 Vision and dental benefits can serve as a type of preventative care.
- 3 Plans that offer vision and dental benefits appeal more to Medicaid members.



## ABOUT ENVOLVE

Envolve is leading the way in the healthcare industry by leveraging and integrating collective expertise to deliver on the purpose to transform the health of the community, one person at a time. Through its family of companies, Envolve provides its nationwide partners with flexible and affordable healthcare solutions including pharmacy benefit management (PBM), specialty pharmacy, vision, dental, diabetes management, nurse advice, MSO services, and more.

### Sources

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