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Dental Wellness Plan Aims to Improve Population Health *More than 17,000 Iowans Sought Services in Initial Months*

(Des Moines, Iowa) – Iowa’s Dental Wellness Plan, which provides oral health services for members enrolled through the Iowa Health and Wellness Plan, has served nearly 17,000 low-income Iowans in its first months of operation.

The Iowa Department of Human Services launched the plan on May 1. It provides comprehensive dental benefits through Delta Dental, the largest commercial dental carrier in Iowa. The design of the plan is unique to Iowa Medicaid. It was established to offer more access to members by using a commercial payer and rate structure, and to give members incentive for taking part in dental wellness activities.

“We know that good oral health can contribute to better overall health, and this new dental plan is an important part of supporting the Iowa Health and Wellness population,” said DHS Director Charles M. Palmer. “Over time, these incentives will lead to better population health and lower system costs. We’re pleased with the access to services the plan has already provided.”

As of August 28:

- About 107,500 Iowans were signed up for the Iowa Health and Wellness Plan. The bipartisan approved plan expands health coverage to eligible Iowans ages 19 to 64 and up to 133 percent of the federal poverty level, meeting Accountable Care Act requirements.
- 17,197 members accessed dental care.
- 69 percent of services patients received were diagnostic and prevention services.
- 44 percent completed risk assessments which can help identify potential issues before they become problems, and allow for less costly, preventive treatments.
- 14 percent of patients received emergency services.
- There were 35,657 claims for a total of about \$5.6 million in services, or an average of about \$158 per member who accessed dental care.

The comprehensive dental benefits are equivalent to the Medicaid dental benefit, and the plan offers performance bonuses for providers.

“This approach focuses on performance measures and holds providers accountable for quality care, and members are accountable for showing up for appointments and completing healthy behaviors in order to earn enhanced services,” Palmer said. “This new plan has everyone doing their part to improve population health.”

More details are available here:

http://dhs.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/IowaHealthand%20Wellness_Dental_FactSheet.pdf

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