

JANUARY 1 - DECEMBER 31, 2025

2025 Medi-Cal Dental Member and Provider Outreach Plan

Gainwell Technologies, in Partnership with the California Department of Health Care Services

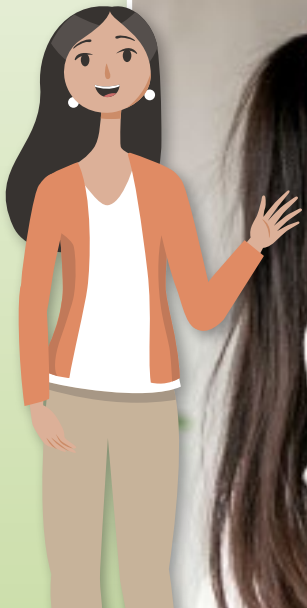


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Goals and Objectives

The **2025 Medi-Cal Dental Member and Provider Outreach Plan** for the period of January 1 through December 31, 2025, is designed by Gainwell Technologies, the Dental Business Operations (DBO) contractor in partnership with the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to help improve the health of Medi-Cal members in the Fee-For-Service (FFS) delivery system by increasing their utilization of the Medi-Cal Dental benefit. This includes motivating members to use their benefits by educating them about their covered services, guiding them on accessing care, and emphasizing to members the crucial connection between oral health and overall well-being. In collaboration with the DHCS, the DBO contractor will implement member and provider outreach efforts under the *Smile, California* campaign to improve the overall utilization of Medi-Cal Dental benefits.

About

In 2016, the Little Hoover Commission released its [Fixing Denti-Cal report](#), which found that less than half of people covered by Medi-Cal saw their dentist at least once a year, citing low utilization, limited provider participation, and lack of awareness of available benefits. The report called for systemic improvements to increase access, simplify administration, and ensure that more Californians could use their dental coverage. In response, the Department of Health Care Services created *Smile, California*, a statewide

awareness and outreach campaign to help Medi-Cal members understand and use their dental benefits.

The outreach goals outlined in this plan build upon the initiatives launched in the inaugural contract year, marked by the introduction of the *Smile, California* campaign. *Smile, California* serves as a promotional campaign to educate Medi-Cal members about their available dental benefits, with the primary goal of encouraging them to schedule dental appointments. Since its inception in 2018,

Department of Health Care Services Medi-Cal Dental partnership with the Office of Oral Health is invaluable for promoting oral health equity across California. The *Smile, California* campaign continues to make a significant impact by providing informative materials and resources that are accessible, engaging, and easy to understand, encouraging Californians to prioritize their oral health and make regular dental visits a part of their oral health routine. *Shakalpi Pendurkar, DDS, MPH, FICD, FACD State Dental Director, Office of Oral Health*

the campaign has developed a diverse array of culturally and linguistically relevant downloadable resources. These resources include flyers, brochures, posters, fotonovelas, infographics, social media assets, presentations, and videos. These resources are readily accessible on two fully ADA-compliant campaign websites: **SmileCalifornia.org** and **SonrieCalifornia.org**. Additionally, the websites feature landing pages available in 19 different threshold languages, offering essential information tailored

2025 Medi-Cal Dental Member and Provider **OUTREACH PLAN**



to Medi-Cal members and resources available in their respective languages. *Smile, California* also maintains an active presence on three social media platforms: [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [YouTube](#). The dissemination of these resources is conducted statewide through strategic partnerships with various entities, including state agencies, Local Oral Health Programs

(LOHPs), the California Oral Health Technical Assistance Center (COHTAC), and community-based organizations (CBOs). Ongoing outreach endeavors will center on the development of customized resources and the cultivation of new and existing partnerships at both the local and statewide levels.

Key components of the plan include:

Member Education:

Fulfilling education and outreach requirements as outlined in California Welfare and Institutions (W&I) Code Section 14132.91. This involves informing Medi-Cal members about dental care availability, providing information on

recommended frequencies for regular and preventive dental care, guiding them on accessing Medi-Cal Dental care, offering assistance with case management and care coordination, and educating them to avoid paying out-of-pocket for medically necessary services.

Increasing Medi-Cal Dental Provider Participations and Reducing Administrative Hurdles for Provider Participation:

Increase the number of Medi-Cal Dental providers providing services while reducing administrative hurdles for participating providers and providers wishing to enroll in Medi-Cal Dental.

Enhancing Access in Underserved Communities:

Focus on improving access to care in all underserved communities.

Boosting Annual Dental Visits and Preventive Dental Services:

Increase the number of Annual Dental Visits by Medi-Cal members and preventive dental services that Medi-Cal members receive.

The outreach objectives will be measured by the following:

Member Outreach Objectives (see Appendix A for baseline):

- 1 Increase statewide utilization of FFS members by three percent (3%) year-over-year.
- 2 Demonstrate a proven increase in the year-over-year FFS member utilization in underserved counties and populations.
- 3 Demonstrate a proven increase in the year-over-year FFS member utilization of services for at least one (1) member demographic experiencing lower-than-average utilization from the year prior.

Provider Outreach Objectives (see Appendix B for baseline):

- 1 Annually increase the number of newly enrolled FFS providers by three percent (3%).
- 2 Increase the number of actively participating FFS providers providing services to children under age six (6).
- 3 Increase the number of actively participating FFS providers providing services to special needs and developmentally disabled populations in Medi-Cal Dental.



Member Audiences

Medi-Cal serves a diverse member population of over 15 million children and adults. The categories include, but are not limited to:

- **Children ages 0-20**
- **Young adults transitioning from foster care ages 18-26**
- **Low-income adults ages 21+**
- **Low-income adults with disabilities ages 21+**
- **Low-income pregnant women**
- **Low-income adults ages 65+**



To produce measurable results in behavior change, the campaign proactively targets members in various settings such as home, school, work, and places of worship. This targeting is based on factors like age, race, utilization patterns, life stages, and developmental needs.



Member Life Stage

Different messaging is crafted for distinct age groups and life stages. Emphasis is placed on targeting parents or guardians of children ages 0-20 and pregnant individuals to promote Medi-Cal Dental preventive services. Messaging for adults and seniors is tailored to encourage the utilization of dental benefits and increase awareness of the connection between oral and overall health.

Utilizers, Lapsed Utilizers, and Non-Utilizers

The campaign categorizes members into three distinct utilization groups:

- **Utilizers:** Members in this group have actively used their dental benefits within the last year. They represent individuals who have engaged with their benefits recently.
- **Lapsed Utilizers:** This group comprises members who have not utilized their dental benefits within the last year. These are individuals with a lapse in their benefit utilization.
- **Non-utilizers:** Non-utilizers are members who have never used their dental benefits. This group includes individuals who, despite being eligible, have not accessed their dental benefits to date.

Education tailored to these groups addresses specific barriers (identified through first-party qualitative research conducted in 2017 and 2019), such as lack of a dental home, unawareness of benefit coverage, and the importance of understanding the oral-health overall-health connection. Communication channels, including statewide and local-level engagements with partners, community outreach, paid social media, and news media, are employed to effectively reach and engage members across these utilization groups.

The DBO contractor monitors utilization data through monthly, quarterly, and annual reports to focus on outreach in counties where there is low utilization. Outreach collaborates with Local Oral Health Programs, partners and stakeholders. Outreach efforts focus on reducing barriers through community outreach and educating members on benefits and resources.

Underserved and Non-Underserved Communities

The Medi-Cal Dental Outreach Plan maintains a targeted approach to educate members and partners statewide, with a particular emphasis on underserved communities. This is especially important with underserved communities. Establishing a monitoring system (e.g., member utilization and provider network capacity) and engaging collaborative community partners are essential to the development of a tailored outreach approach. These efforts aim to resolve member dental care access issues, motivate members to utilize their dental benefits, and increase provider network capacity. Cultural and language insights are prioritized when communicating with diverse campaign target audiences. Outreach efforts focus on reducing barriers through community outreach, member education, providing resources, and support for innovative care delivery models such as mobile dental services and teledentistry. Opportunities to drive utilization are identified in communities with both adequate and inadequate provider networks.

- **Adequate Provider Network Communities (Non-Underserved Communities):** These are areas with large member populations and sufficient providers (at least 1 provider for every 2,000 members). Community outreach and education, bolstered by strategic partnerships, aim to align member needs with available resources in low-utilization counties.
- **Inadequate Provider Network Communities (Underserved Communities):** These are areas lacking sufficient providers (1 provider for over 2,000 members) for the member population. The campaign has partnered with Smile Dental Services to offer mobile dental services in targeted counties. This initiative sets the stage for future mobile dentistry partnerships. Refer to the “Mobile Dental Van Capabilities” section for more detailed information about the mobile dental vans. Community outreach and education, bolstered by strategic partnerships, aim to align member needs with available resources (see Appendix C for List of Underserved Counties).



Provider Audiences

To achieve measurable outcomes in the recruitment and retention of Medi-Cal Dental providers, we customize our outreach efforts across the following categories:

- **General Dental Providers and Allied Dental Professionals (Registered Dental Hygienists, Registered Dental Hygienists in Extended Functions, and Registered Dental Hygienists in Alternative Practices) Currently Enrolled in Medi-Cal:** This includes those currently enrolled and those enrolled but not actively accepting additional Medi-Cal members or referrals.
- **General Dental Providers and Allied Dental Professionals Not Enrolled in Medi-Cal:** This includes reaching professionals providing dental services across the state who are not currently enrolled in Medi-Cal. This also includes mobile dental services and school-based programs throughout California that are not currently part of the Medi-Cal network.
- **Dental Schools:** This includes engaging dental students and advanced degree students in residency programs.
- **Specialty Dental Providers:** This includes focusing on outreach to dental professionals with specialized expertise, such as: Endodontists, Oral Surgeons, Orthodontists, and Pediatric Dentists.



Outreach initiatives cover all regions of the state, with a targeted approach for areas where provider availability is low. For this purpose, “low” is defined as a 1:2000 member-to-enrolled provider ratio within a specific county. Dedicated outreach dental consultants also provide dental administration support services and education to dental organizations, Safety Net Clinics, LOHPs, school-based health centers, dental professional schools, and Allied Dental Professional Programs. Their outreach includes attending events, speaking engagements, and hosting online presentations.

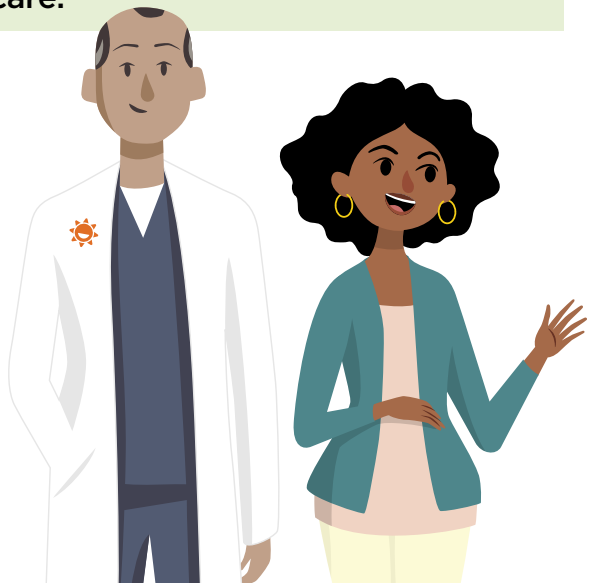
Targeted outreach focuses on areas where:

- The number of enrolled dental providers and/or facilities providing dental services to Medi-Cal members is low compared to the Medi-Cal population or sub-population in the area.
- The number of billing and rendering providers to member population and sub-population is low compared to the Medi-Cal population or sub-population in the area.
- The number of billing and rendering providers is low compared to the member population or sub-population per county (by member and provider county), or city.
- Other geographic areas of the state if designated by DHCS.

Key Program Messaging

To determine how to evolve and expand *Smile, California* campaign messaging for both member and provider target audiences, the DBO contractor analyzes market research and collaborates closely with partners and Community Health Workers who directly engage with the Medi-Cal member audience.

The campaign's messages aim to educate and inspire members to utilize available Medi-Cal Dental services and encourage providers to enroll and provide care.



Member Key Messages:

Benefits and Dental Health

- Medi-Cal has dental covered.
- Medi-Cal members are eligible for free dental services.
- Regular dental visits are as important to good health as daily brushing and flossing.
- Don't wait until it hurts to see the dentist.
- Annual dental visits are free with Medi-Cal.
- Keeping your teeth healthy is one of the best things you can do for your overall health. Dental services are covered during pregnancy.
- *Smile, California* is a campaign to make Medi-Cal members aware of their dental benefits.
- Visit [SmileCalifornia.org](https://www.smilecalifornia.org) to learn about covered services and find a Medi-Cal dentist.
- Transportation to your dentist should not be an issue, Medi-Cal covers transportation for dental visits.
- Language interpretation and American Sign Language translation services are available to Medi-Cal members at no cost.
- Teledentistry services are available for Medi-Cal members to get care faster and can prevent dental problems from becoming emergencies.

Babies and Children

- Baby teeth usually start coming in around 6 months, and most children have all 20 by age 3. Begin brushing with a tiny smear of fluoride toothpaste as soon as the first tooth appears.
- Medi-Cal provides routine, preventive, and restorative dental services for free to children.
- Regular dental check-ups help your child establish a lifetime of healthy oral care habits.
- Children should visit the dentist every six months or more often if needed (based on Caries Risk Assessment risk level).
- A child's first dental visit should take place when their first tooth appears and no later than their first birthday.
- Protect your children's teeth against cavities with molar sealants; sealants are a part of your child's Medi-Cal benefit.

Adults and Seniors

- Adults should visit the dentist every 12 months for good oral health.
- Medi-Cal members ages 21 and older have full-scope dental coverage.
- It is important to continue taking care of your smile, especially as you age.
- Seniors are prone to gum disease and other oral health problems, but by brushing twice a day, flossing daily, and seeing a dentist regularly, you can lower your risk.

Pregnant Members

- It is safe and recommended to see your dentist for a cleaning and exam before your baby is born.
- Your gums and teeth need special attention during pregnancy.

- Medi-Cal covers dental services for pregnant members throughout their pregnancy and 12 months postpartum.

Caregivers

- As a caregiver, you play an important role in helping your loved one maintain a healthy smile.
- When your loved one is struggling with other health problems or has special needs, oral health can become a lower priority. Good daily oral hygiene and regular dental visits can help your loved one avoid tooth pain and tooth loss and improve their overall health.

Members with Disabilities and Special Health Care Needs

- Good oral hygiene is essential for everyone, especially members with special health care needs: brush at least twice daily with fluoridated toothpaste, floss daily, and visit the dentist at least once a year.
- Dentists can provide routine care to members with special health care needs. In some cases, general anesthesia or sedation may be recommended for physical, behavioral, developmental, or emotional conditions.
- Tips for a more comfortable dental visit include bringing a favorite item, using headphones, practicing exams at home, and asking about wheelchair accommodations.
- Members with special health care needs may face unique dental challenges, such as delayed tooth eruption or trauma from falls. Extra dental visits or cleanings may be available.

Fluoride

- Fluoride helps protect teeth from cavities and fights tooth decay.
- Fluoride occurs naturally in water and is an important part of maintaining healthy teeth.
- Ask your dentist about fluoride varnish treatments, a protective gel applied to teeth. Medi-Cal covers fluoride varnish every 12 months for adults and more frequently for children based on age.
- Drink fluoridated water to strengthen teeth and reduce the risk of cavities.



Care Coordination

- Dental Care Coordination ensures members get the right services for their needs and helps make accessing care easier and more convenient.
- Dental Care Coordinators can help locate a general or specialty dentist, schedule dental appointments, provide interpreter services, and arrange transportation to and from visits.
- Members can access Care Coordination services for free by completing the [Care Coordination Referral Form](#) for themselves or someone else, or by calling the Medi-Cal Telephone Service Center.



Teledentistry

- Teledentistry allows Medi-Cal members to access dental care from anywhere, using a phone or video call with a dentist.
- Teledentistry helps members get quick advice for dental problems, catch issues early, and find a dental home.
- Avoid unnecessary emergency room visits with teledentistry.
- Teledentistry can prevent dental problems from becoming emergencies and may be a better option than going to the hospital or emergency room.

Back-Tooth-School

- A child's oral health affects all aspects of their life, including eating, speaking, sleeping, self-esteem, and school performance.
- Tooth decay is preventable, and establishing good dental care habits at home is important, but home care alone is not a substitute for a dental check-up.
- Children should have a dental home and see a dentist every six months to stay pain-free and ready to learn.
- California law requires children in kindergarten or first grade to have a dental assessment by May 31 to support school readiness.
- A good school year begins with a dental check-up.

Provider Key Messages:

Learn about *Smile, California*:

- *Smile, California* is a campaign to help Medi-Cal members use their dental benefit, learn about covered services, and find a dental home.
- Medi-Cal members can learn about covered services at SmileCalifornia.org.
- Interpreter services are available and free by calling the Telephone Service Center. Transportation is also available free of charge for members.

Informed Members Become Informed Patients

- Your partnership and support of *Smile, California* will increase the number of members and provide accurate information about their Medi-Cal Dental benefit.

About Enrolling as a Medi-Cal Provider:

- Learn more about becoming a Medi-Cal Dental provider and joining California's network of comprehensive healthcare programs, which serves over 15 million Californians — forming the backbone of California's healthcare safety net.
- Medi-Cal patients represent one-third of

Californians and half of the state's children.

- By becoming a Medi-Cal Dental provider you will help bring access to oral health care to Californians who need it most.
- Visit the Partners and Providers page on SmileCalifornia.org to watch the Medi-Cal Dental Provider Testimonial series to learn why dentists participate in Medi-Cal Dental.

Learn More about Services and Benefits for Medi-Cal Providers

- The Provider Application and Validation for Enrollment (PAVE) portal is DHCS' web-based application designed to simplify and accelerate enrollment processes. Providers can utilize the portal to complete and submit applications, report changes to existing enrollments, and respond to requests for continued enrollment or revalidation. PAVE features secure login, document uploading, electronic signature, application progress tracking, intuitive guidance, social collaboration, training support and much more.
- As a Medi-Cal provider, you will receive one-on-one assistance from our Dental

Support Team every step of the way. The Provider Support team is available to assist with questions regarding program benefits, policies and procedures, and billing guidelines, as well as to provide one-on-one training as needed.

- The provider website application (self-service web portal) allows secure login for providers and their staff to access claim status, Treatment Authorization Request (TAR) status, weekly check amounts and more. Providers can also access member history through the portal and provide feedback via a newly created feature.
 - Existing providers and delegates will be prompted to create a 4-digit PIN upon logging into the Medi-Cal Dental Provider Portal.
 - New providers registering for the first time will be required to create a PIN during the registration process. The PIN will be used for recovering forgotten usernames or passwords.
 - Providers and delegates can view or update their PIN at any time by visiting the "My Account Profile" page within the portal.

In addition to changes in the PIN, the Medi-Cal Dental Provider Portal has been updated with an improved user interface to enhance providers' and delegates' experience.

- Treatment history will reflect 5 years
- Claim status is 2 years
- Additional information delegates relationship code
- Our incentives include student loan repayment programs and practice grants. Additionally, we offer support through the no-cost Treating Young Kids Everyday (TYKE) training certificate and complimentary CEUs (18 CEUs for in-person sessions and 9 CEUs for Seminars On-Demand).
- Resources are readily available for you and your office staff, including Electronic Data Interchange (EDI), Provider Training Seminars, Webinars, and On-Demand Seminar Training, Telephone Support Center regional outreach and training representatives.

Supporting Providers in Delivering Care:

- *Smile, California* offers dedicated one-on-one support to providers to streamline patient care, from navigating billing to accessing training and resources.

- *Smile, California* is ready to assist Medi-Cal providers with their efforts to improving the oral health of members in underserved communities

Educational and Training Opportunities:

- Providers have access to exclusive no-cost training programs with continuing educational credit like Caries Risk Assessment (CRA) training and Medi-Cal Dental seminars to enhance their expertise.
- *Smile, California* ensures that providers have access to user-friendly tools, including webinars, in-person training, and on-demand learning modules, to simplify their workflow.
- Providers can access digital toolkits, including resources and videos from the “Oral Health Education” series, to help enhance awareness in their communities about Medi-Cal Dental benefits and the importance of maintaining oral health.
- Providers stay informed with monthly e-newsletters that deliver updates, program enhancements, policy changes, and best practices directly to your inbox, ensuring you're always equipped with the latest information to serve your patients.



Financial and Professional Growth Opportunities:

- Medi-Cal offers student loan repayment programs and practice grants, helping providers grow their practice while contributing to healthier communities.
- With the provider website application, you gain access to real-time patient history, claim status updates, and treatment authorization information, empowering you to deliver better care efficiently.

Engaging the Community Through *Smile, California*:

- *Smile, California* supports providers in establishing long-term relationships with patients by promoting the importance of finding and maintaining a dental home.

Overall Approach

Framework

Smile, California is a comprehensive campaign that is informed by research and uses best practices in health communications to develop campaign strategies and tactics that directly reach Medi-Cal members and those influencing their health decisions.

The campaign is structured around three foundational pillars: **(1)** Awareness and Education, **(2)** Local Activation, and **(3)** Access.

This framework guides activities focused on enhancing program awareness, educating members, involving community partners, and expanding access to Medi-Cal Dental providers.

The framework and supporting 2025 tactics are outlined below and described on the following pages.

1

Awareness and Education

Smile, California reaches members with messages that resonate by implementing outreach tactics that target them at various touchpoints in their daily lives. By creating culturally and linguistically appropriate messaging and resources, the campaign educates members about their available dental benefits and the importance of regular utilization. Educational efforts address barriers such as the lack of a dental home, member unawareness of benefit coverage, and the connection between oral and overall health. The campaign utilizes diverse communication channels, including partner engagements, community outreach, paid social media, and news media, to reach Medi-Cal members throughout California.

2

Local Activation

Recognizing the influential role of community partners, *Smile, California* engages them in distributing and promoting campaign messaging and resources. Partners receive materials tailored to motivational factors, such as overall health and preventive care, encouraging members to seek dental services. Collaborating closely with key partners, including the California Department of Public Health, Office of Oral Health, participating LOHPs, and the California Department of Education with its school districts, ensures the relevance and appropriateness of the campaign's messaging. These partnerships leverage established trust with the member audience, facilitating direct outreach.

3

Access

Smile, California aims to increase the number of Medi-Cal Dental providers in California and ensure members have access to care in their community.

Campaign tactics involve retaining existing providers, recruiting and enrolling new ones, re-engaging inactive providers, motivating inactive providers to treat more members, and encouraging providers to support member outreach efforts and promote *Smile, California*.

The Provider Outreach department is developing strategic alliances with stakeholders to increase member's access to care.



Cultural and Linguistic Competency

Given the diversity within the Medi-Cal population, it is imperative that *Smile, California* messages and materials are culturally and linguistically competent. We engage with partners and stakeholders to help with content creation and adaptation to ensure we are effective in our communication with Medi-Cal Dental's diverse population. In accordance with the DBO contract, the member websites are produced in English and Spanish with landing pages in 19 additional languages. Campaign materials are produced in English and Spanish with additional translations or adaptations for threshold languages.

There will be periodic updates to translations or adaptations for materials as they are evaluated to address language inequities. All campaign content adheres to the standards of the American Disabilities Act and is written at, or as close as possible to, a sixth-grade reading level, considering the necessary technical language. Additionally, the Medi-Cal Dental Provider Directory has been updated to reflect providers who have completed cultural competency training.

Awareness and Education



Member Awareness and Education

Member Market Research

The *Smile, California* campaign is grounded in formal research to better understand Medi-Cal members' awareness, attitudes, and behaviors related to dental care. Research methods included online surveys with 2,600 members, focus groups with 100 parents across California, and stakeholder meetings.

Key findings revealed that while most members are aware that Medi-Cal includes dental coverage, many are unaware of the full range of free services available for their children, such as fluoride treatments, sealants, and crowns. Common barriers to utilization include a perceived lack of need, difficulty

finding providers, confusion about available services, and logistical challenges such as distance and scheduling.

Research also highlighted strong motivators for engaging in dental care, including parents' desire to protect their children's health, maintain family wellness, and prevent dental problems before they occur. Stakeholders emphasized the need for easy-to-navigate, culturally and linguistically relevant resources to support members in accessing care.

These insights inform *Smile, California's* approach to messaging, which aims to clarify available benefits, reinforce the importance of dental providers, and

connect oral health to overall health. Communications are tailored to specific audiences, including

parents of young children, pregnant individuals, and seniors, and are designed to be clear, actionable, and at a sixth-grade reading level.

Regional Member Representatives

Smile, California [Regional Member Representatives](#) provide statewide support to Medi-Cal members, covering Northern, Central, Western, Southern, and Eastern Southern California. These representatives assist members with questions about Medi-Cal Dental

benefits, enrollment, and provider referrals. They also attend community events to educate members and promote the utilization of dental benefits. By offering personalized assistance and addressing specific needs, the representatives play a vital role in ensuring members have access to the care and resources they need.

2025 Medi-Cal Dental Member and Provider **OUTREACH PLAN**

Material Development

Smile, California develops outreach materials tailored to each planned promotion throughout the year to raise awareness of Medi-Cal Dental benefits and encourage members to use their coverage. Each promotion listed below includes a mix of print, digital, and social media resources designed to educate members and support partners in sharing information.

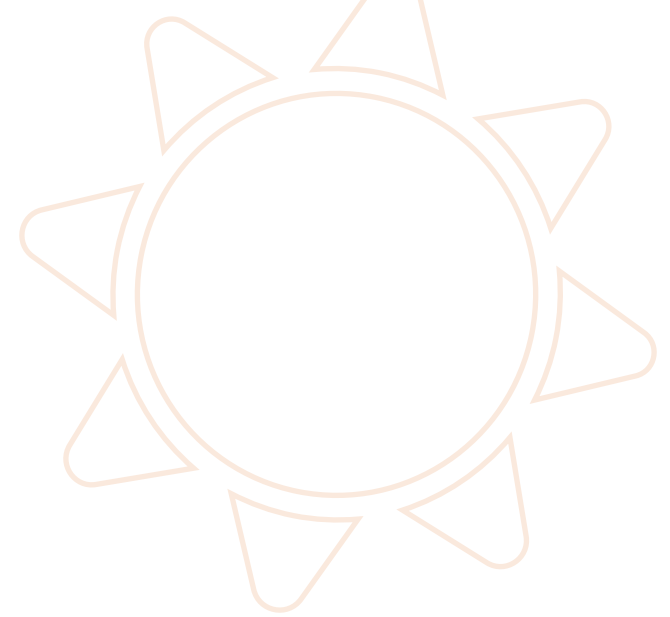
- National Children’s Dental Health Month
- Community (Partner) Toolkits
- Kindergarten Oral Health Assessment
- Older Americans Month
- Oral Health Month
- Mobile Dental Van Events
- Back-Tooth-School
- Oral Health Education Video Series
- Oral Hygiene Month
- Managed Care Health Plan Dental Liaison and Community Health Worker Toolkit
- Teledentistry
- National Brush Day
- Caries Risk Assessment

Caries Risk Assessment Awareness Initiative for Young Children

One of California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM) dental initiatives is the Caries Risk Assessment (CRA). This initiative aims to raise awareness about the importance of preventive dental care for children ages 0-6, with a focus on early interventions that support lifelong oral health.

This will be carried out through a campaign targeting parents and guardians of young children and through bulletin articles to providers with information they can share with families. To support this effort, new outreach materials will be developed, including a children’s illustrated book that helps to reduce fear of dental visits by explaining the experience in a kid-friendly way. These and other resources will be promoted with partners to expand access to preventive oral health education and reinforce positive dental habits from the start.

By emphasizing the resources and services available through Medi-Cal Dental, this effort will educate families and providers on the value of caries risk assessments and preventive care. Outreach and educational activities will highlight the



role of early dental visits in avoiding more invasive treatments and fostering healthier outcomes for young children.

Awareness for Older Adults and Individuals with Disabilities

We will focus on expanding efforts to promote Medi-Cal Dental benefits for older adults and individuals with disabilities through a statewide awareness initiative. This campaign will highlight key services, including preventive care and accessibility-focused resources, to ensure these populations are informed about the dental care available to them. Materials will be developed to support both individuals and partners, fostering greater awareness and utilization of Medi-Cal Dental benefits.

Year-Round Promotional Campaigns

Smile, California supports several key promotions throughout the year, each designed to increase awareness and utilization of Medi-Cal Dental benefits. These campaigns are complemented by comprehensive materials and resources tailored to both members and partners, along with earned media opportunities to amplify their reach. Each initiative is supported with a comprehensive suite of materials, including flyers, social media content, educational resources, and media outreach.

These efforts ensure Medi-Cal members and partners are consistently engaged and informed about the importance of oral health care and the benefits available to them.

- **National Children’s Dental Health Month (NCDHM):** Highlighting the importance of establishing early dental habits and promoting Medi-Cal Dental benefits for children and families.
- **Back-Tooth-School Campaign (BTS):** Focused on ensuring children and teens start the school year with healthy smiles through access to preventive and routine dental care.

- **National Brush Day (NBD):** Reinforcing the importance of daily oral hygiene practices, including brushing and flossing, to maintain good oral health.
- **End-of-Year Reminder Campaigns:** Encouraging members to utilize their dental benefits before the year ends, ensuring they maximize access to covered services.

***Smile, California* Website (SmileCalifornia.org/ SonrieCalifornia.org)**

The primary call to action across all campaign materials remains a visit to the *Smile, California* campaign websites (SmileCalifornia.org and SonrieCalifornia.org). These websites are tailored to the Medi-Cal member, prioritizing mobile-friendliness, easy navigation, and the delivery of important health and benefit information at an appropriate readability level. The websites provide information about covered services, oral health tips, and downloadable resources and assist members in locating Medi-Cal providers accepting new patients through the “Find A Dentist” tool. They also offer a range of resources designed for partners and providers to enhance engagement with members. As new *Smile, California* campaign materials

are developed, they are promptly made available for download on the websites, serving members, partners, and providers.

Given the significant number of downloadable resources produced since the campaign’s launch in 2018, the DBO contractor will continue to identify opportunities to enhance the user experience, including updates to the website design and features.

3,016,423
WEBSITE VISITS

288,872
MATERIALS
DOWNLOADS

1,667,756
FIND A DENTIST CLICKS

Combined data from SmileCalifornia.org and SonrieCalifornia.org from 10/01/2018 to 12/31/2024.



Website Visits Downloads Find A Dentist Clicks

2024	887,337	4,611	519,955
2023	676,589	118,906	342,763
2022	594,318	109,916	268,698
2021	411,169	52,501	213,588
2020	226,405	20,679	125,943
2019	220,481	14,565	120,908

English proficiency. To effectively do this we identify and address the barriers keeping members from utilizing their available dental benefit and then develop appropriate messaging and resources. Since the campaign launch, hundreds of resources have been developed to inform all segments of our audience in a way that addresses their primary areas of concern. Remaining nimble with our ability to adjust messaging is key to ensuring we keep members as informed as possible about their benefit, covered services and the importance of regular dental visits.

Medi-Cal Dental Website

The DBO contractor will continue to maintain the Medi-Cal Dental website (dental.dhcs.ca.gov), conforming to technical requirements and revising content when needed. On an ongoing basis, conceptual improvements are discussed on how to best utilize the Medi-Cal Dental website as a primary mechanism of communication for providers. A proposal for suggested enhancements is submitted to DHCS annually.

Continuous feedback from state and local partners regarding members' needs, combined with media and website analytics, has been and will continue to be the driving force behind content development. To streamline communication to different segments of our target audience, the campaign is structured around seven fundamental promotions. *Smile, California* is committed to expanding on these core promotions, enhancing existing content, and creating new material tailored to key populations and topics of interest to members.

Campaign Promotions

Smile, California is designed to educate members about the importance of good oral health throughout all stages of life, aiming to inspire regular dental visits as a fundamental aspect of their oral health routine. Our central focus is delivering relevant, informative, and motivational messaging to all member audiences, including those with limited

Your adventure starts with a dental check-up!

Regular check-ups catch problems early, keeping your family's teeth healthy and strong. Preventive care is the first step toward a healthy smile!

CHECK-UP CANYON

Sealant Island is the place to protect your smile!

Dental sealants are a protective coating applied to teeth that prevent up to **80%** of cavities. They keep your child's teeth strong and are covered by Medi-Cal!

Explore more at SmileCalifornia.org.

Medi-Cal Has Dental Covered

Regular dental check-ups are important for your overall health. Medi-Cal covers dental services for **FREE** for all ages. See the chart below for details on covered services.

SERVICES	BABIES	KIDS	TEENS	PREGNANCY	ADULTS & SENIORS
Exams** x-rays, teeth cleanings, and fluoride varnish	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fitting and tooth removal	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Emergency services	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sedation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Minor root canals***	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Root canals	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Orthodontics (braces)****	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Crowns	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Partial and full dentures and denture relines	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Scaling and root planing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Maximum number of services are limited to 12 per year for members under the age of 21 and every 12 months for members 21 and older. *Maximum number of services are limited for kids and teens up to age 21. ****Maximum number of services are limited for kids and teens up to age 21.

Babies Take your child to the dentist by their first tooth or first birthday. Baby teeth are key for eating, talking, and smiling.

Kids Around age five, children start losing baby teeth. Ask your dentist about molar sealants, covered by Medi-Cal, to prevent cavities.

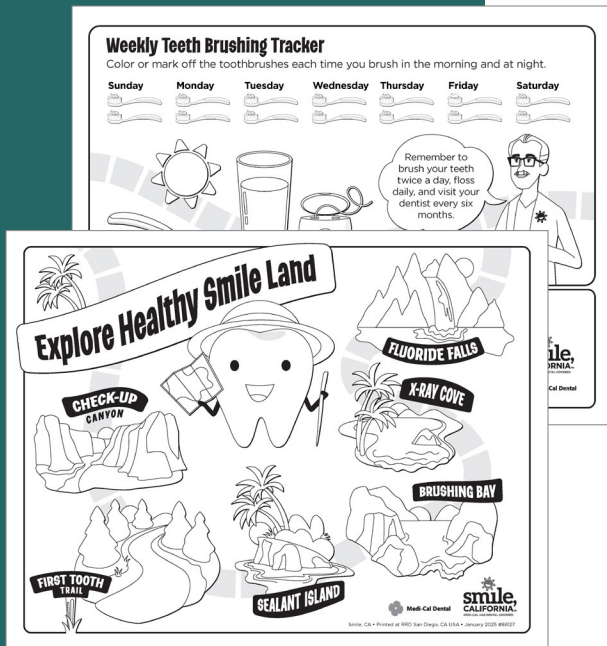
Teens Sugary foods increase the risk of gum disease and cavities in teens. Regular dental check-ups keep their smiles healthy.

Pregnancy Dental care is safe and recommended during pregnancy. Medi-Cal covers dental visits during pregnancy and 12 months postpartum.

Adults and Seniors Regular dental visits keep your teeth strong and reduce the risk of gum disease. Medi-Cal covers full dental care for adults 21 and older.

Caregivers Help your loved one maintain good oral health through daily care and regular dental visits. Don't forget to care for your own smile too!

Scan the QR code or visit SmileCalifornia.org to learn about your free dental services and find a Medi-Cal dentist today. Or call 1-800-322-8384 for help.



Outlined below are the continuing promotions that serve as overarching themes, encompassing the majority of our resources and outreach efforts:

Medi-Cal has Dental Covered: “As a Medi-Cal member, your dental benefit includes routine, preventive and restorative care for free.” Some resources target all members and others are tailored for a specific member audience such as caregivers or young adults transitioning from foster care.

Don’t Wait Until it Hurts to See the Dentist: “Routine dental exams give your dentist a chance to learn about your overall health and catch potential problems before they start.” Resources target all members, with a focus on parents being a good example for their children.

Seal Today to Prevent Decay: “Sealants are protective coatings put on back teeth to help prevent cavities and keep them healthy. Sealants are part of your child’s Medi-Cal Dental benefit and can protect their back teeth for several years.” Resources target parents of Medi-Cal children ages five and older.

Healthy Children Are Ready to Learn: “Poor oral health can affect a child’s attendance, grades and overall performance in school. Seeing a dentist every six months is the best way to ensure a child remains pain-free and able to focus while in school.” Resources target parents of K-12 Medi-Cal members.

Medi-Cal Covers Dental During Pregnancy and Beyond: “Keeping your teeth and gums healthy is one of the most important things you can do during your pregnancy. It is also an important part of keeping your baby healthy.” Resources target Medi-Cal members who are pregnant or recent mothers.

A Healthy Smile Never Gets Old: “As we age, we are more prone to developing oral health problems. Practicing good oral health habits, like visiting the dentist regularly, can help keep you and your smile healthy for years.” Resources target older adult Medi-Cal members.

Emergency Room Diversion: Emergency Room Diversion uses a proactive strategy to decrease Emergency Room visits by providing members with access to educational resources and providers who offer teledentistry services.





SMILE, CALIFORNIA IS A VITAL PARTNER IN EDUCATING MEDI-CAL ENROLLED CALIFORNIANS ABOUT THEIR DENTAL BENEFITS AND IMPORTANCE OF ORAL HEALTH. THE EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS THEY DEVELOP ARE INFORMATIVE, ACCESSIBLE, AVAILABLE IN MULTIPLE LANGUAGES, AND VISUALLY ENGAGING. THEIR WEBSITE IS AN ESSENTIAL RESOURCE FOR BOTH MEDI-CAL MEMBERS AND THE COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS THAT SERVE THEM.

UCSF, California Oral Health Technical Assistance Center

Statewide Partnerships and Sponsorships

Smile, California seeks the support of trusted community organizations to effectively communicate accurate information about Medi-Cal members' dental plans, covered services, and available providers. Our approach involves purposeful engagement with CBOs, LOHPs, and stakeholders across the state. These partnerships not only contribute to a comprehensive understanding of various perspectives within communities but also position these trusted community partners as frontline brand ambassadors for *Smile, California*. We provide them with materials that promote the *Smile, California* brand, fostering confidence among members regarding their dental plans. Through our local activation efforts, we not only engage stakeholders, community partners and providers as our trusted messengers to reach our Medi-Cal member audience but to also reach media.

Additionally, we will continue to seek opportunities to establish and maintain new partnerships with key community partners and will also continue to maintain existing relationships with state and county agencies, departments and organizations that serve the Medi-Cal population.

In 2025, our commitment includes equipping partners with campaign materials designed to resonate with members and encouraging them to access Medi-Cal Dental services. *Smile, California* will continue its collaboration with key partners on material development to ensure a consistent and effective outreach strategy.

Smile, California collaborates with a diverse range of partners, including but not limited to the California Oral Health Technical Assistance Center; state and local Women, Infant and Children offices; state and local Head Start agencies; state and local First 5 commissions; school districts; school-based health centers; LOHPs; and medical providers and other entities.

Acknowledging the trust and influence that CBOs hold within the Medi-Cal audience, *Smile, California* is committed to expanding the Organizational Brand Ambassador stipend program. This initiative involves identifying, training, and deploying health educators within ambassador organizations to convey campaign messages to members in their communities. The scopes of work encompass various activities, such as providing dental referrals using the "Find A Dentist" tool and the DHCS

Medi-Cal Provider Directory, disseminating information about Medi-Cal Dental benefits through digital communications and social channels (e.g., e-newsletters, Instagram, Facebook, blogs, etc.), displaying Medi-Cal information in their facilities, and delivering Medi-Cal Dental presentations to members in their communities.

The *Smile, California* outreach team actively participates in both in-person and virtual events and conferences. Community events play a pivotal role in engaging with the Medi-Cal population and establishing connections with agencies serving counties throughout the state, both underserved and non-underserved.

Member Materials

In 2025, we will continue to support the campaign by leveraging the resources we have created. These materials include promotional brochures, fotonovelas, informational flyers, fact sheets, videos, infographics and activities for children. *Smile, California* will also develop new messaging and resources to promote the new Medi-Cal Dental Portal and Medi-Cal Dental Application (MDA). The campaign will coordinate a comprehensive, multi-faceted outreach strategy to ensure awareness, engagement and utilization among eligible members.

The DBO contractor will develop new messaging and resources to promote the Medi-Cal Dental Teledentistry Provider Directory. This will help members address non-traumatic dental concerns without visiting the emergency room.

Strategies to promote new tools and resources will include structured and effective communication channels to reach the target audience.

Skip the Line and Go Online

Medi-Cal members can access dental services from anywhere. Teledentistry services are available so members can talk to a dentist over the phone or through a video call with any provider state-wide and not just within their county.

With Teledentistry, You Can:

- Talk to a dentist anywhere.
- Get quick advice for dental problems.
- Catch dental problems early.
- Get help finding a dental home.

Avoid Unnecessary Emergency Room Visits

Teledentistry helps you get care faster and can prevent dental problems from becoming emergencies. It can also be a better choice than going to the hospital or emergency room.

Find a Medi-Cal Dentist Today

Visit SmileCalifornia.org to find a dentist for online, phone, or in-person appointments.

Do you have Dental Managed Care? Scan for contact information and request a list of teledentistry providers.

Get A+ Smiles with Medi-Cal Dental
Oral Health and School Readiness Fact Sheet

Dental Benefits for All
Medi-Cal covers dental care for everyone, including cleanings, check-ups, fillings, and dentures. Members under 21 can visit the dentist up to twice a year and sometimes more and members 21 and older can visit once a year. Understanding these benefits helps maintain good dental health year-round.

How Poor Oral Health Affects Children:

- Poies and Learning:** Dental problems can make it hard to concentrate, affecting how well kids do in school and how often they go.
- Daily Discomfort:** Tooth pain can make eating, talking, and sleeping uncomfortable.
- Health Risks:** Not treating dental issues can lead to infections and other health problems.
- Low Self-Esteem:** Poor oral health can hurt a child's confidence and self-esteem.

School Readiness Tips

- Start Good Habits Early:** Encourage consistent brushing and flossing habits and set an example by maintaining your own dental care.
- Schedule Regular Check-Ups:** Regular dental visits help detect and address issues early, ensuring overall dental health.
- Follow the School Requirement:** California law requires children to have a dental check-up by May 31st of kindergarten or first grade.
- Ask a dentist about dental sealants:** They can prevent up to 80% of cavities on back teeth, where most cavities form.**

How to Find a Medi-Cal Dentist

1. Visit SmileCalifornia.org
2. Click the orange "Find A Dentist" button at the top.
3. Search for a Medi-Cal dentist near you who is accepting new patients.

School Performance: Research shows that kids with tooth pain miss more school and are four times more likely to get low grades.*

To learn more, visit SmileCalifornia.org/School-Readiness

Get A+ Smiles with Medi-Cal Dental All School Year

LEARN MORE

SmileCalifornia.org/School-Readiness

Healthy Teeth Support Healthy Minds and School Success!

FREE DENTAL SERVICES WITH MEDI-CAL

SmileCalifornia.org/School-Readiness

Ace School Exams with a Healthy Smile!

FREE DENTAL SERVICES WITH MEDI-CAL

SmileCalifornia.org/School-Readiness

Protect Your Child's Smile with Dental Sealants

Sealants can prevent up to 80%* of cavities, helping to keep your child's smile healthy all school year long.

Learn more at SmileCalifornia.org

*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth> (last reviewed 2/2014)

Proteja la sonrisa de su hijo con selladores de muelas

Los selladores pueden prevenir hasta el 80%* de las caries, ayudando a mantener la sonrisa de su hijo saludable durante todo el año escolar.

Aprenda más en SonrieCalifornia.org

*Centros para el Control y la Prevención de Enfermedades, <http://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth> (última revisión febrero 2014)

Get A+ Smiles with Medi-Cal Dental!

Medi-Cal covers preventive dental services for children, helping them stay healthy and prepared for school year-round.

Learn more at SmileCalifornia.org

Direct Contact Campaigns

Newly enrolled members receive a mailing about Medi-Cal Dental benefits and how they can access assistance in making an appointment with a provider. The mailer currently includes the following information:

- Available dental benefits
- Information on the importance of early and periodic dental care
- Information on Care Coordination and Case Management
- How to obtain services
- Language assistance for all threshold languages
- How to avoid inappropriate care or fraudulent dental providers
- How to obtain assistance in getting care or resolving problems with dental care
- Medi-Cal Dental toll-free number

In 2025, campaign messages will be integrated into Medi-Cal mailers to families with children who have not had a dental visit or a recommended diagnostic and preventive service within the time frames recommended in the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry's dental periodicity schedule. These mailings help members understand how to access materials and how to locate a participating Medi-Cal Dental provider.

Provider Awareness and Education

Medical Dental Integration

Incorporating the dental care message into the primary care setting is essential to help raise awareness of the correlation between oral health and overall wellness. The campaign guides primary care providers to oral health resources available on the Medi-Cal Dental and *Smile, California* websites (e.g., oral health assessment and fluoride varnish application). Medical providers can access referrals to providers for Medi-Cal Dental members on the Medi-Cal Dental website and/or the *Smile, California* website.

Smile, California will continue to introduce medical providers and their staff to new member-facing resources they can share with patients, as well as the digital physician's toolkit. The toolkit, which contains oral health education resources, will be updated in 2025 and shared with Health Plans and medical professionals throughout the state. Resources will continue to be made available to DHCS contracted health plans and in-network primary care providers involved in the care or coordination of medical services to Medi-Cal members.

Teledentistry

Medi-Cal Dental is committed to continuing to enable broad teledentistry coverage post-Public Health Emergency (PHE) via both asynchronous and video and audio-only synchronous interaction. To support awareness and help members understand teledentistry, *Smile, California* has developed resources including a flyer, social media posts, and a video. Additionally, the teledentistry provider directory is being translated into Spanish to ensure greater accessibility for diverse member populations.

On May 1, 2023, DHCS expanded its teledentistry policy to allow Medi-Cal Dental Fee-For-Service (FFS) and Dental Managed Care (DMC) providers the ability to establish new patient relationships

through an asynchronous store and forward modality, consistent with Federally Qualified Health Center/Rural Health Clinic (FQHC/RHC) providers. This initiative involves ongoing efforts to encourage teledentistry with a focus on expanding the virtual dental home among providers, with specific objectives:

- Teledentistry referrals are available by using the Find-A-Dentist Tool on SmileCalifornia.org.
- Promoting teledentistry to participating providers in Medi-Cal Dental.
- Maintaining collaborative relationships with providers adopting teledentistry to facilitate a smooth transition into Medi-Cal Dental.
- Retaining provider participation in teledentistry through diverse communication channels (e.g., emails, Medi-Cal Dental bulletins, Online Provider Surveys, and contact with Provider Relations Representatives) to address and assist with questions related to Medi-Cal Dental.
- Through the online Teledentistry Survey, we will be able to identify providers offering services through teledentistry.

Provider Materials

Provider education materials and information are distributed to enrolled and non-enrolled dental providers via the Medi-Cal Dental website, email, provider trainings, provider Continued Education (CE) seminars, provider bulletins, and the Provider Handbook. Topics include the Practice Support Grant through the Cal Health Cares program, Student Loan Repayment Programs (e.g., National Health Services Corps and California State Loan Repayment Grant), Proposition (Prop) 56, and California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM), fee schedule, free transportation to dental appointments, the missed appointment process, provider resources, and additional program information. Providers have the ability to access Provider Portals and Learning Management Systems instructional videos on the Medi-Cal Dental website, which are accessible via unlisted *Smile, California* YouTube links. These services and features help increase providers knowledge of Medi-Cal Dental, reduce administrative burden, and enhance current reimbursements through incentives. Providers also have access to a range of *Smile, California* promotional materials to educate members about Medi-Cal's dental benefits on SmileCalifornia.org and SonrieCalifornia.org. In 2025, a QR code will be incorporated into partner-facing

resources, directing them to the Partners and Providers page on the campaign website for easy access to resources and materials. From the inception of *Smile, California*, the campaign has recognized Medi-Cal Dental providers with a “thank you” gesture. Provider recognition efforts will continue in 2025.

California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM) Dental Initiatives

The California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM) dental initiative became effective January 1, 2022. The DBO contractor will continue promoting and educating providers about CalAIM. The CalAIM dental initiatives include:

- Expanded pay-for-performance (P4P) payments that reward increasing the use of preventive services and establishing/maintaining continuity of care through a dental home.
- Statewide benefit of a Caries Risk Assessment (CRA) Bundle for young children ages 0-6.
- Statewide benefit of Silver Diamine Fluoride (SDF) for all ages including young children, members with specified high-risk, and institutional populations.

Local Activation

Local Partnerships

Smile, California places significant emphasis on local outreach engagement and collaborative community partnerships as essential elements of its communication strategy.

Smile, California partners with a variety of organizations positioned to help Medi-Cal members in their communities. Meeting members where they are via the support of trusted community organizations is one of the most effective ways to reach Medi-Cal members with information about their benefits, covered services, and available providers. *Smile, California* equips partners with materials that promote the *Smile, California* brand and leverages the trust members have in these community partners to further build confidence in Medi-Cal Dental.

Smile, California also partners with Medi-Cal Dental providers to bring the brand into their offices, creating a friendly, comfortable, and educational environment for members to receive care.

In 2025, *Smile, California* will implement strategies focused on providing access assistance to rural regions. Additionally, a faith-based outreach effort will be launched to connect with members in their places of worship. This effort includes coordinating one-on-one meetings, providing materials, message points, and print-ready articles to enhance outreach effectiveness.

Oral Health Educational Video Series:

Smile, California has developed an Oral Health Educational Series consisting of nine videos designed to educate Medi-Cal members about key aspects of Medi-Cal Dental and the importance of maintaining good oral health. These videos provide accessible and actionable information to help promote oral health awareness, encourage the utilization of dental services, and improve oral health outcomes across diverse communities statewide.

At the local level, *Smile, California* activates its outreach through several strategies, including:

- Engaging with local school districts to disseminate information about Medi-Cal Dental through channels like school newsletters.
- Providing ongoing support and collaboration with the state's participating LOHPs.

To maximize the impact of this series, *Smile, California* is distributing comprehensive digital toolkits for partners and providers to view, download, and share the videos with members in their communities. The full video series will also be hosted on a dedicated page of SmileCalifornia.org and SonrieCalifornia.org website, ensuring easy access for partners to integrate these resources into their outreach efforts. This statewide promotional initiative empowers partners with the tools and information needed to educate members effectively and drive greater awareness and utilization of Medi-Cal Dental benefits.

Access



Regional Member Representatives

Regional Member Representatives play a vital role in ensuring Medi-Cal members have the support they need to access and utilize their dental benefits. Based throughout the state, these representatives coordinate presentations, participate in community events, and provide Medi-Cal Dental information directly to members. Their responsibilities include answering questions about Medi-Cal Dental benefits, directing members to enrollment resources, facilitating provider referrals, and ensuring members understand how to access dental care. By fostering relationships with community organizations and engaging directly with members, they help break down barriers to care and promote oral health awareness across diverse communities.

Provider Outreach Representatives

Provider outreach representatives are based throughout the state, each responsible for a specific geographic region. These representatives focus on provider recruitment and retention to strengthen the Medi-Cal Dental network and ensure adequate access to care. They offer ongoing support to dental and medical providers, assisting with program navigation, policy updates, and resources to enhance service delivery. Additionally, they work to establish, maintain, and expand relationships with stakeholder groups through ongoing collaboration, including regular monthly meetings. They also represent the program at professional and community events such as those hosted by the California Dental Association and the California Dental Hygienists' Association. It is easy for providers to connect with their outreach representative. Contact information by region is available

in the [Outreach Representative Map](#). Their efforts are critical to ensuring that providers remain engaged, supported, and equipped to deliver quality dental care under Medi-Cal Dental.

Telephone Service Center

The Medi-Cal Dental Telephone Service Center provides members with direct access to support and information about their dental benefits. By calling the toll-free number at (800) 322-6384, members can speak with trained agents Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., or use the automated Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system. Through these services, members can receive help locating a Medi-Cal Dental provider, get information about clinical screening appointments, check the status of Treatment Authorization Requests (TARs), ask general benefit questions, and learn how to file a grievance or

complaint. The IVR also offers information on covered benefits, Fair Hearings, requesting dental records, and reporting suspected fraud. To ensure accessibility for all members, TTY assistance is available for individuals who are hearing impaired by calling (800) 735-2922 and requesting a connection to the Member Line.

Dental Care Coordination

Care Coordination representatives assist Medi-Cal members in connecting with the care they need. Services include help with appointment scheduling, locating a general dentist or dental specialist, language support including American Sign Language, and arranging transportation when needed. Members can access these services by completing the [Care Coordination Referral Form](#) or by calling the Telephone Service Center.

Dental Case Management

Dental Case Management is designed to support Medi-Cal members with special health care needs who face challenges scheduling and coordinating complex treatment plans involving multiple medical and dental providers. Members can be referred to the program by their medical

or dental provider, case worker, or other healthcare professional, based on a current comprehensive evaluation and treatment plan. Referrals can be submitted by completing the online [Case Management Referral Form](#).

Oral Health Education Videos

The *Smile, California* Oral Health Education Video Series helps members, partners, and providers access essential oral health information and resources that support timely, informed care. Covering topics for all ages and needs, including Medi-Cal benefits, dental emergencies, oral care during pregnancy, nutrition, and more, these videos provide practical guidance to help viewers maintain healthy smiles at every stage of life. All nine videos will be available on [YouTube](#) in both English and Spanish as of October 2025, ensuring accessible, culturally relevant information that members can use to navigate care and providers can use to better support their patients.

Co-Branding

Smile, California offers both organic and paid co-branding opportunities for LOHPs, county agencies, and select non-profit organizations. Co-branded materials feature the organization's logo alongside the *Smile, California* and Department of Health Care Services logos, helping partners raise awareness about available Medi-Cal Dental benefits and connect members to local resources. For organic co-branding, we provide final design files to the organization, which covers the cost of printing or advertising space. For organizations with a paid media budget, *Smile, California* offers additional support, including media recommendations, vendor suggestions, and custom materials for advertisements such as shopping carts, billboards, and movie theaters. By collaborating on design, messaging, and ad placement, these co-branded campaigns increase visibility of Medi-Cal Dental benefits, helping members more easily access care and providers more effectively reach eligible populations.



Dental Office Toolkit

We will continue to offer the *Smile, California* Provider Toolkit, a collection of materials to help providers bring the *Smile, California* brand into their offices and clinics for their staff and Medi-Cal members. Outreach representatives send materials to providers and partners when requested, and those materials include printed brochures, flyers, fotonovelas, toothbrushes and toothpaste. All printed materials are available for download on the *Smile, California* website.

Gabby

Gabby is Medi-Cal Dental's automated virtual assistant designed to help providers quickly access information and support. Available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, Gabby can provide answers on topics such as claim status, seminar schedules, patient history, provider payments, and provider enrollment. Providers can also use Gabby to get help with common questions, including resetting a Personal Identification Number (PIN), enrolling in Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) or Electronic Data Interchange (EDI),

submitting claims, requesting copies of the Provider Handbook, or obtaining Explanation of Benefits (EOBs) and paper forms.

Provider Self-Service Website

Accessible through the Medi-Cal Dental website, the Provider Self-Service Portal enables secure log-on and authentication, granting providers 24/7 access to claim status and history, payment details, and secure web forms. The portal facilitates searches of patients' Medi-Cal claim history. Educational materials, including the provider continuing education (CE) seminar schedule for in-person, virtual events, and on-demand training, are available on the Medi-Cal Dental website. The portal also houses essential resources such as the Provider Directory, Provider Handbook—which includes a Manual of Criteria with a Schedule of Maximum Allowances—Provider Bulletin, missed appointment process, and downloadable provider forms.

Provider Enrollment Outreach

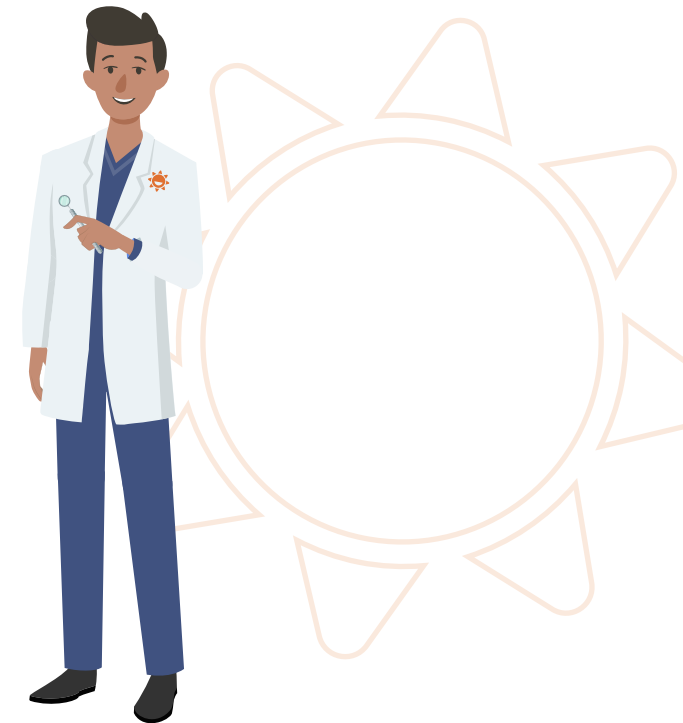
To grow provider engagement with the *Smile, California* campaign and increase their visibility to Medi-Cal members, we will expand the existing provider testimonial series. The videos help members become familiar with Medi-Cal Dental providers, and their care, while also offering non-enrolled providers a chance to learn about the many benefits and resources available through the program. By showcasing positive provider experiences, these testimonials aim to motivate more providers to enroll and begin serving Medi-Cal members in their offices.

Additional outreach will be provided to dental providers who need assistance in resubmitting enrollment application deficiencies. The outreach team will work directly with providers to remediate deficiencies and submit the required documentation through [PAVE](#). Since October 31, 2022, Medi-Cal provider enrollment has been completed through the PAVE system. This streamlined online

portal makes enrollment more efficient by allowing providers to complete and submit applications, report updates to existing enrollments, and respond to requests for continued enrollments or revalidation. PAVE includes features such as secure login, document uploading, electronic signature, application progress tracking, and intuitive step-by-step guidance. Providers can also access training and support resources directly within the system to help ensure a smooth process. Additional enrollment resources are available [here](#).

To further support providers and improve member access, enhancements have been made to the Medi-Cal Dental Provider Directory. Providers can indicate if they offer teledentistry, accept new Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) patients, provide a website, or accommodate individuals with physical disabilities. Additional fields capture information on patients with special health care needs, and listings display when they were last updated.

Providers also have the option to be added to the DHCS referral-only list by completing the Provider Directory and Referral Form and selecting "Yes, I am accepting new Medi-Cal patients by DHCS referrals only." These updates make it easier for members to find the right provider and allow providers to clarify their participation preferences.



Provider Recruitment and Network Adequacy Monitoring

The provider outreach team contacts newly licensed providers, dental schools, the California Dental Association, the California Dental Hygiene Association, local dental societies, specialty dental organizations, and ethnic dental associations to promote Medi-Cal Dental and encourage participation throughout the state. In areas of need, outreach representatives visit non-enrolled providers, supplying information about Medi-Cal Dental and recruitment materials. Virtual presentations are also available. Phone calls, virtual and in-person on-site visits are conducted to encourage participation among non-enrolled providers.

Following enrollment, the provider outreach representatives will conduct in-person or virtual visits to provide technical assistance, address providers' inquiries, and respond to their requests. The provider outreach team actively encourages enrolled providers to opt-in to the provider referral list and be listed in the Medi-Cal Dental Provider Directory, thereby enhancing member access and

expanding the number of members receiving services. Monitoring member access to dental services occurs at the statewide level, in border communities, and within sub-populations that demonstrate or appear to be at risk of low or declining utilization. The Medi-Cal Dental Provider Directory will be updated to include a search feature for the provider's name to make finding a dentist more efficient.

As of June 6, 2025, the directory also includes enhanced accessibility features, such as filters for providers offering American Sign Language (ASL), teledentistry services, and other ADA-related special health care needs accommodations, helping members better connect with providers who can meet their specific needs.

Provider outreach has focused on the recruitment of dental hygienists of all types (RDH, RDHEF, RDHAP) who work with a range of services (e.g., mobile, teledentistry, school-based, clinic/offices).



Mobile Dental Van Capabilities

The provider outreach team will continue to work with Medi-Cal Dental providers to schedule mobile dental events in underserved counties and those counties interested in mobile services where members have difficulty accessing dental care. Some of these counties are now working directly with the mobile dental van provider to provide continuing care to members.

Additional Provider Outreach Initiatives

Free and Charitable Dental Clinics

Our recruitment efforts will extend to free dental clinics that rely on donations to sustain their operations. We will actively reach out to these clinics, aiming to enlist them as providers and enroll their dentists as rendering providers. Additionally, we will offer educational opportunities to inform them about the benefits of Prop 56, CalAIM, and grants, which can serve as crucial financial support to sustain dental services and increase their capacity.

By focusing on recruiting these free dental clinics and providing them with essential information about available reimbursement rates, our goal is to strengthen our network of providers and decrease the gap in access to care within the community. This initiative aligns with our commitment to improving access to affordable dental care for all.

Dental School Outreach

To facilitate the enrollment of fourth-year dental students who have successfully passed the licensure exam and specialty residents as potential Medi-Cal Dental providers, the provider outreach team will reach out to dental schools to provide a

presentation and/or participate in school events to provide an earlier introduction to the enrollment process through PAVE, and second, to educate students about valuable opportunities, such as the student loan repayment program and practice grants, available to them once they become providers.

Our goal is not only to expand our provider network but also to educate new graduates with the knowledge and resources necessary for fulfilling careers as Medi-Cal Dental providers. This initiative reflects our commitment to enhancing access to care.

Regional Centers

The outreach team is actively working to boost provider recruitment efforts with the aim of expanding the care capacity available to our special needs members.

This multifaceted approach involves re-engaging with previous providers, collaborating with stakeholders for expansion, and providing support to existing providers through education on the practice support grants and student loan repayment programs to help them recruit providers and increase access to care for our members.



As part of the provider outreach focus, we will continue to perform the following activities:

- Focus outreach to recruit specialists that address the needs of members with special health care and case management needs.
- Identify potential areas where Medi-Cal Dental can be streamlined to reduce the administrative burden on providers without compromising program integrity.

Measurement and Reports

The following surveillance indicators are tracked to monitor member utilization of services with the goal of increasing member annual dental visits in underserved and non-underserved counties; and increasing preventive services for at least one Medi-Cal member group experiencing low utilization from the prior year. Provider surveillance indicator metric goals include increasing the number of newly enrolled Medi-Cal Dental providers; and increasing the number of actively participating Medi-Cal providers serving children under age six (6) and members with special health care needs.

The completion of outreach communications and customer service/experience is assessed on an annual basis, by calendar year both by mail and available online.

Recommendations are proposed accordingly as part of the annual Member and Provider Outreach Plan. Quarterly output metrics include but are not limited to:

- Quantity of campaign marketing and promotional materials distributed to members.
- Quantity of partnerships and collaborations and the number of members reached because of these partnerships (provided monthly, quarterly and annually).

Analytics for SmileCalifornia.org and SonrieCalifornia.org, such as site visits, time spent on a page, resource downloads, bounce rate (percentage of visitors navigating away after viewing only one page), etc.

- Number of events in which the campaign had representation or messages were shared through partner organizations.
- Partners utilizing *Smile, California* content for their social media platforms.
- Insights from the Provider Customer Service and Provider Capacity Survey, highlighting provider feedback crucial for ongoing program enhancements.

The DBO contractor will continue to monitor and assess the effectiveness and success of the *Smile, California* campaign.

The methods employed for collecting and analyzing this information encompass, among other measures:

- Evaluation of the increase in the utilization of services, as outlined in the baseline report.
- Assessment of the target audience's response to calls to action, including their engagement with SmileCalifornia.org and SonrieCalifornia.org, and utilization of the "Find A Dentist" feature (reported on a monthly, quarterly, and annual basis).
- Monitoring social media engagement, including metrics such as increases in likes and followers.

The DBO contractor will continue to provide DHCS with monthly, quarterly, and year-to-date reports on performance and program utilization measures including, but not limited to: the annual increases in services and visits required in the contract. At DHCS' request, the DBO contractor will provide ad hoc reports using available systems and tools (e.g., internal databases, data warehouses, and decision support systems).



Available reports include:

- Monthly analytics related to mass email communications.
- Number of billing, rendering general dental and dental specialty providers actively enrolled in the Medi-Cal Dental Provider Master File, including a breakdown by county and specialty and baseline numbers as of the start of the contract.
- Number of billing and rendering providers with at least one claim submitted in the previous 12-month period, including a breakdown by county and specialty and baseline numbers as of the start of the contract.
- Outreach efforts directed at non Medi-Cal providers, specifying their geographical location, dentist names, provider identification (ID) numbers, and type of practice (general dentistry and/or specific specialty).
- Number of billing and rendering providers providing services to Medi-Cal Dental members under age six (6) and members with special health care needs.
- Outreach and responses from dental professional schools, universities, federally funded dental clinics, school-based health centers, and dental professional organizations invited to become Medi-Cal Dental providers.
- Providers contacted through outreach efforts and their response.
- Providers using mobile and/or portable dental equipment.
- Utilization of data by county and age group, including information from federally funded clinics.
- Recommendations for innovative methods to reach unenrolled providers include engaging RDHs, RDHEFs, RDHAPs, Dental School Residency Programs, and stakeholder collaborations.

APPENDIX A – Member Outreach Objectives

1) E.3.c-2-Increase Statewide utilization of FFS services by three percent (3%) year-over-year.

	Member Utilization	Actual % Utilization	Target Increase
Baseline 2023 Count	4,869,069	34.1%	37.1%
2024 Count	5,214,021	34.6%	40.1%

• Utilization was FFS and SNC data

2) E.3.c-3-Demonstrate a proven increase in the year-over-year FFS member utilization in underserved counties and populations.

	Member Utilization	Actual % Utilization	Target Increase
Baseline 2023 Count	152,546	39.8%	41.8%
2024 Count	154,605	36.3%	42.8%

• Utilization was FFS and SNC data

3) E.3.c-4-Demonstrate a proven increase in the year-over-year FFS member utilization of services for at least one (1) member demographic experiencing lower-than-average utilization from the year prior. Statewide Use of

Sealants Ages 6-9

	Member Utilization	Actual % Utilization	Target Increase
Baseline 2023 Count	166,398	15.5%	16.5%
2024 Count	172,196	15.88%	17.5%

Statewide Use of Sealants Ages 10-14

	Member Utilization	Actual % Utilization	Target Increase
Baseline 2023 Count	123,457	9.1%	10.1%
2024 Count	124,098	9.14%	11.1%

Statewide Use of Fluoride Varnish Ages 0-6

	Member Utilization	Actual % Utilization	Target Increase
Baseline 2023 Count	390,639	29.9%	30.9%
2024 Count	387,714	31.1%	32%

Statewide Use of Fluoride Varnish Ages 6-9

	Member Utilization	Actual % Utilization	Target Increase
Baseline 2023 Count	518,689	48.5%	49.5%
2024 Count	524,079	49.8%	51.3%

Statewide Use of Fluoride Varnish Ages 10-14

	Member Utilization	Actual % Utilization	Target Increase
Baseline 2023 Count	585,054	42.8%	43.8%
2024 Count	592,496	43.6%	44.9%

APPENDIX B – Provider Outreach Objectives

- 1) **E.3.c-2-Annually increase the number of newly enrolled FFS providers by three percent (3%).**

	Provider	Target Increase
Baseline 2023 Count	12,599	12,725
2024 Count	13,318	13,107

- 2) **E.3.c-3-Increase the number of actively participating FFS providers providing services to children under age six (6).**

	Provider	Target Increase
Baseline 2023 Count	6,296	6,359
2024 Count	6,814	6,882

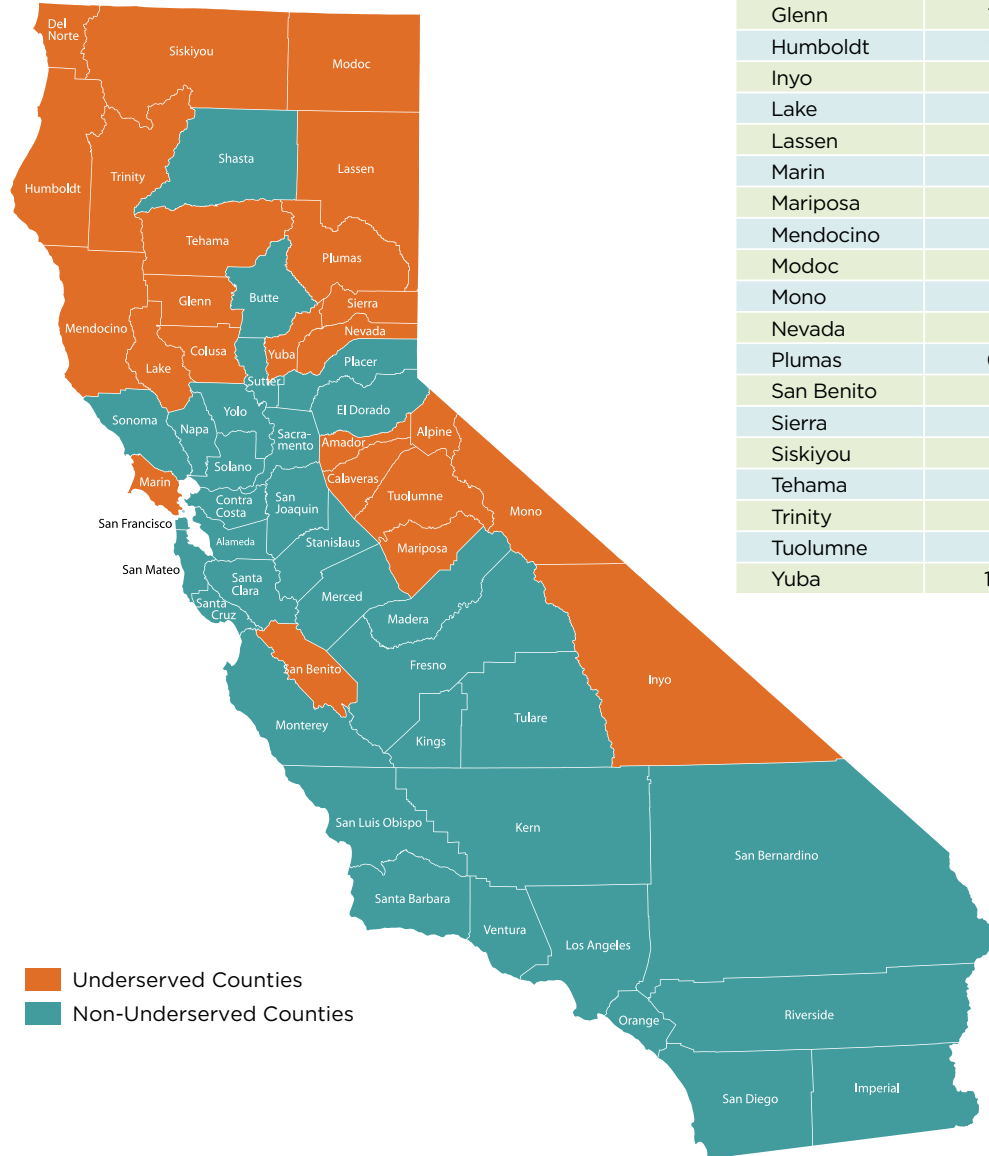
- 3) **E.3.c-4-Increase the number of actively participating FFS providers providing services to special needs and developmentally disabled populations in Medi-Cal Dental.**

	Provider	Target Increase
Baseline 2023 Count	781	789
2024 Count	839	864

APPENDIX C — List of Underserved Counties

These are counties that have 1 provider for over 2,000 members as of October 2025.

- Alpine
- Amador
- Calaveras
- Colusa
- Del Norte
- Glenn
- Humboldt
- Inyo
- Lake
- Lassen
- Marin
- Mariposa
- Mendocino
- Modoc
- Mono
- Nevada
- Plumas
- San Benito
- Sierra
- Siskiyou
- Tehama
- Trinity
- Tuolumne
- Yuba



■ Underserved Counties
■ Non-Underserved Counties

Underserved Counties	
County	Provider ratio
Alpine	0: 326
Amador	0: 9,459
Calaveras	1: 13,878
Colusa	1: 5,459
Del Norte	0: 12,661
Glenn	1: 13,899
Humboldt	1: 19,743
Inyo	0: 5,361
Lake	1: 6,997
Lassen	1: 8,697
Marin	1: 2,140
Mariposa	0: 5,726
Mendocino	1: 2,608
Modoc	1: 3,535
Mono	1: 3,603
Nevada	1: 5,426
Plumas	0: 5,806
San Benito	1: 5,426
Sierra	0: 764
Siskiyou	1: 9,375
Tehama	1: 10,175
Trinity	0: 5,517
Tuolumne	1: 7,555
Yuba	1: 39,403

Non-Underserved Counties	
County	Provider Ratio
Alameda	1: 490
Butte	1: 221
Contra Costa	1: 393
El Dorado	1: 323
Fresno	1: 542
Imperial	1: 777
Kern	1: 535
Kings	1: 519
Los Angeles	1: 533
Madera	1: 502
Merced	1: 247
Monterey	1: 788
Napa	1: 273
Orange	1: 319
Placer	1: 140
Riverside	1: 389
Sacramento	1: 32
San Bernardino	1: 354
San Diego	1: 549
San Francisco	1: 312
San Joaquin	1: 356
San Luis Obispo	1: 441
San Mateo	1: 82
Santa Barbara	1: 441
Santa Clara	1: 601
Santa Cruz	1: 545
Shasta	1: 205
Solano	1: 215
Sonoma	1: 513
Stanislaus	1: 339
Sutter	1: 94
Tulare	1: 388
Ventura	1: 253
Yolo	1: 417

*The data provided is accurate and current as of October 2025.