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Vote YES on HB 3464-A Timely Access to Dental Care for Pregnant Women

For pregnant women, time is of the essence to gain the prenatal benefits of dental care. But timely access is a challenge for many pregnant patients receiving medical assistance. HB 3646-A directs the Oregon Health Authority to ensure pregnant medical recipients outside of Coordinated Care Organizations (CCOs) have timely access to dental care consistent with existing timely access rules for patients enrolled in CCOs.

Goal: Better oral health for pregnant women and the next generation of Oregonians

Good oral hygiene during pregnancy, including professional dental care, may decrease the chance of passing on caries-producing bacteria to the child. In addition, pregnancy is a key time when mothers are motivated to make life changes and learn new health behaviors. Improving access to dental care is an opportunity to teach pregnant women about optimal oral hygiene and pass healthy habits, including using dental services, to their children.

Challenge: Delayed care is a missed opportunity to gain the prenatal benefits of good oral health

Pregnant women on medical assistance programs are at higher risk of periodontal disease, which affects 40% of pregnant women¹. Long wait times can create complications and costly over-utilization of emergency departments, and mean that we miss the opportunity to provide the prenatal benefits of improved oral health.

This is especially problematic for women who receive OHP pregnancy benefits through open care because they have a short time period to obtain care, and are not able to be in a CCO or DCO. They are likely to have lacked dental coverage before qualifying for medical assistance due to pregnancy, and their coverage ends soon after giving birth. With this short coverage window and the high potential impact of care, pregnant women have special needs for timely access to dental care.

Solution: Support HB 3464-A to ensure pregnant women have timely access to covered dental services

Oregon's overall health will benefit if pregnant women are able to access covered dental benefits, and help their children start off in life as healthy as possible. This bill requires OHA to ensure pregnant women receiving medical assistance who are not enrolled in a Coordinated Care Organization to be able to access needed dental care. It requires OHA to set timelines for emergency, urgent and routine dental care. The bill also requires OHA to report back to the legislature on progress toward timely access.

¹ Oral health care during pregnancy and through the lifespan. Committee Opinion No. 569. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. Obstet Gynecol 2013;122:417-22.

FROM THE DESK OF


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