

# The Votes Are In

Successfully Advocating for Medicaid Adult Dental Coverage

Kelly Richburg,  
krichburg@deltadentalwa.com

**Washington Dental Service  
Foundation**

*Community Advocates for Oral Health*

## What happened?

- State restored dental coverage for Medicaid-insured adults.

## What's the impact?

- Potentially affects 775,000 people
- Costs the state \$24 million over the biennium



# Messages that Resonated

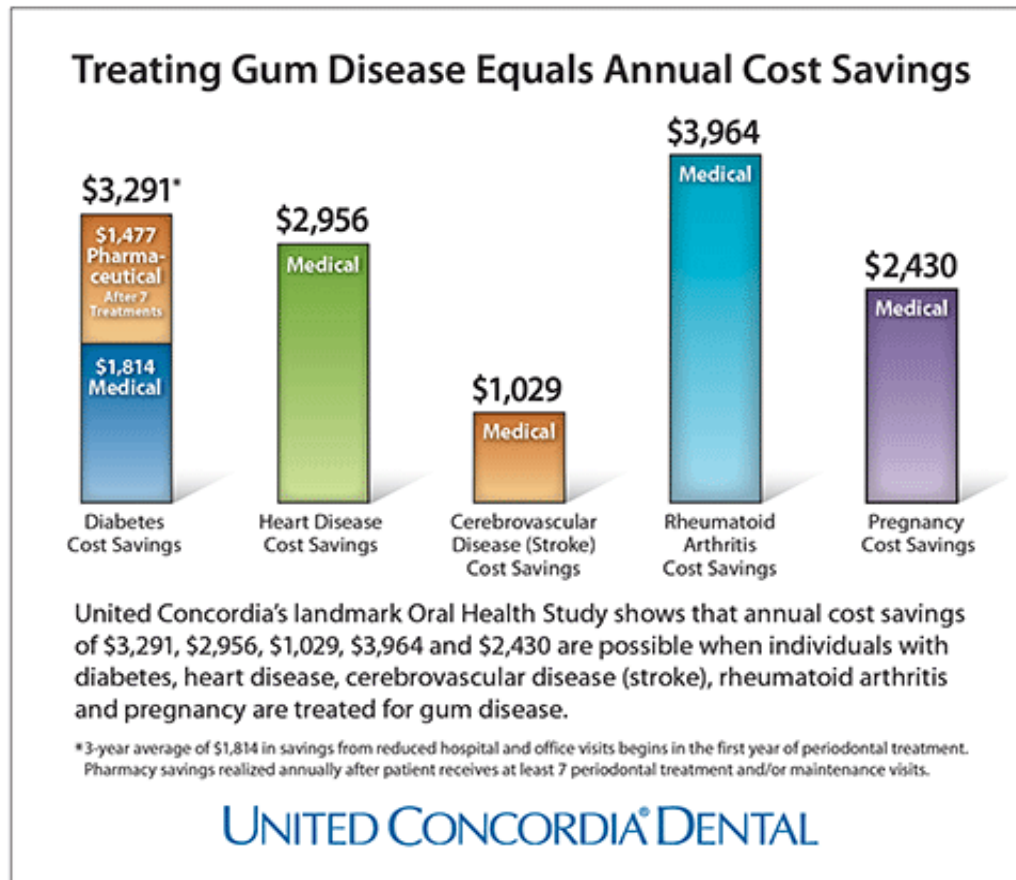
## Why?

- Opportunity to leverage federal dollars – Medicaid expansion
- Dental-related visits to the ER are costly and don't address the problem.  
**\$36 million over 18 months**
- Poor oral health affects people's ability to get a job.
- Untreated oral disease can have serious health consequences.



# Messages that Resonated

- Providing dental care can lead to medical cost savings, especially for people with diabetes. **\$24 million in savings projected over the 2-year budget cycle**



Oral health is essential to overall health

Oral health care helps people with diabetes stay healthy

DELTA DENTAL  
Washington Dental Service Foundation

OralHealthWatch.org

# Strategies for Communicating Messages

## How?

- Worked with Coalitions & Partners
- Met with Legislators & Agency Officials
- Engaged the News Media
- Radio & Online Advertising
- Grassroots Activity- Involved the Public



**Citizens' Watch**  
*for* **Oral Health**

# In Your State

Adapt our materials to suit your needs:

- Various 1-pagers distributed to policymakers
- Earned media articles
- Action alerts, Blog posts
- Text of radio spots
- Other media touting the importance of oral health

Take a toolkit, visit [OralHealthWatch.org](http://OralHealthWatch.org) for electronic version