



CASE STUDY

Making an Economic Impact on Louisiana's State of Dental Health

Preventive care is critical to curbing long-term costs of neglected oral health. Learn how Taylor Dental & Braces is making a difference in Louisiana by delivering better care and lower costs.

AT A GLANCE

LOUISIANA CHALLENGES

- Fewer dentists per capita
- Higher costs of dental care
- Greater health disparities
- Only 45% of kids on Medicaid/CHIP visited a dentist in the last year
- 40.7% of adults did not visit a dentist in the last year

TAYLOR DENTAL WINS

- Greater spend on preventive oral care led to 3 years of lower total per patient costs than the combined dental provider network in LA



"Kids and their parents don't know that tooth decay, if left untreated, can lead to disease or even death – so we're educating them about the importance of prevention. We know this is working because they're calling us to make appointments."

DR. CARL BOYKIN, DMD

Benevis District Dental Director

CHALLENGE

Louisiana ranks among the lowest in the United States for dental health and #49 for fewest dentists per capita, which makes finding a dentist challenging and finding one who accepts Medicaid even harder. Lack of access in the state contributes to higher-than-average, out-of-pocket annual dental costs of \$116.35; and most restorative services remain uncovered for adults on Medicaid. Each of these challenges contributes to Louisianans' low life satisfaction ranking related to their oral condition at #49 in the U.S.

Compounded by greater racial and ethnic health disparities, Louisiana carries the third highest economic burden in the country relative to its gross domestic product (GDP) at 5.99%. For these reasons, the physical and financial burden of oral health is high for Louisianans.

SOLUTION

Making sure that every child and adult in Louisiana has access to affordable, high-quality dental care is mission critical to Benevis and its Taylor Dental & Braces practices.

Taylor Dental cares for the oral health of families in 9 underserved communities across the state — 94% of which rely on Medicaid or Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) plans. With over a decade of experience and 101,000 patient visits a year, Taylor Dental understands that prevention is critical to curbing long-term costs of poor oral health; and they are making a difference by providing regular preventive care to residents in the state of Louisiana.

METHODOLOGY

Taylor Dental findings are based on 3 years of patient data derived from 2019, 2020, and 2021. The 9 practice locations are geographically dispersed across the state of Louisiana. Three offices are located in the Greater New Orleans area, including New Orleans, Gretna, and Metairie. The remaining six offices provide vital dental access to the towns of Monroe, Lafayette, Lake Charles, Shreveport, and Baton Rouge, and the surrounding rural areas.

As a leading dental provider caring for these communities, Taylor Dental captures the highest share of patients in Monroe (25%), Lafayette (40%), and Lake Charles (33%), and the second highest share of patients in Shreveport (20%) and Baton Rouge (14%).

Medicaid claims paid data have been used in the 3-year comparison of Taylor Dental data.



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FAST FACTS

ABOUT TAYLOR DENTAL & BRACES

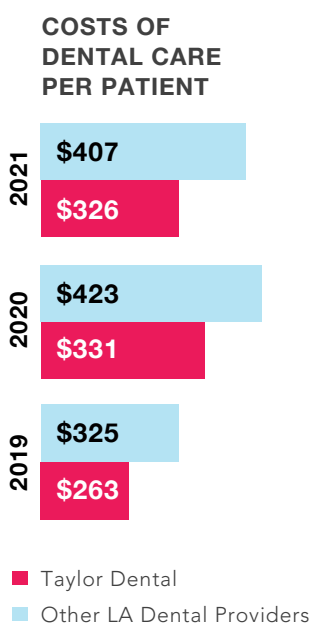
- 10+ years in LA market
- 9 dental & orthodontic offices
- 101,000+ patient visits per year
- 94% of patients on Medicaid or CHIP plans

RESULTS

Taylor Dental data show that investing in regular preventive care helps to decrease costly dental conditions. By engaging patients in earlier oral care, Taylor Dental's 9 practices realized lower costs of care per patient for 3 consecutive years — despite treating disadvantaged populations of Medicaid beneficiaries. Based on claims paid data, the practices' costs per patient were also significantly lower compared to the network of dental providers in the state.

Taylor Dental's early intervention and education of patients on the importance of oral health not only supports better care, but it also supports better costs of care. It means that the practice's dental professionals have spent more time on patient exams, X-rays, and sealants, and less time and expense on fillings and crowns. It's a win-win for the patient with healthier teeth and less invasive care, and the provider and their ability to deliver a better patient experience and improved outcomes.

- Taylor Dental had lower costs of care per patient in each of the 3 years of data (2019-2021) compared with the total Louisiana dental provider network.
- Taylor Dental spending on diagnostic and preventive services was proportionately higher than spending by the total Louisiana dental provider network over the same 3-year period.
- Although Taylor Dental had similar utilization of child dental cleanings as other providers in the state, Taylor Dental had significantly higher utilization of sealants.
- Taylor Dental had dramatically lower per patient usage of composite fillings and lower utilization of stainless steel crowns than other providers.



LOOKING AHEAD

Adequate provider reimbursement is critical in improving patient access to oral health. Recognizing the importance, policymakers in Louisiana increased reimbursement rates for dental Medicaid in July 2023 by adding more than \$50 million in funding across the state. The substantial investment in dental healthcare is beneficial because it will help to expand the number of dentists available to Louisianans with Medicaid coverage.

Everyone deserves equal access to high-quality dental care to thrive. Aimed by this mission, Taylor Dental and Benevis encourage other providers to join them in addressing geographic and coverage barriers that persist in dental care nationwide — especially in marginalized areas like Louisiana where the need is often the greatest.