



Kate Stets

Chief Financial Officer, Benevis

As Chief Financial Officer at Benevis, Kate Stets is responsible for strengthening the clinical and financial operations of the dental organization. Although new to the dental industry, she arrived at the company with a wealth of healthcare experience, including emergency care, anesthesia, and research and consulting.

While Stets has spent almost 20 years experiencing different healthcare specialties, what interested her in dental was seeing the need for care and Benevis' commitment to increasing access. "Many children with tooth pain, because they can't access a dentist quickly, end up in emergency rooms. If you're a parent and your child says, 'Mom, I can't sleep because my tooth hurts,' but you can't get into a dentist for weeks, you're forced to go to the ER. This drives up healthcare costs and isn't the right setting for dental care. We want to keep kids healthy rather than treat them only after the pain and decay have set in. Benevis focuses on providing preventive care to Medicaid and uninsured populations,

which was a key motivator for me to join."

Over 80% of Benevis patients are covered by Medicaid or Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), which generally provide care to lower-income populations that may not be covered by traditional insurance plans. As Chief Financial Officer, Stets helps set strategy to ensure that Benevis can continue to increase access to care for these communities.

"The main challenge, whether we're talking about children or adults, is that Medicaid reimbursement rates are generally low compared to private payers. This limits

the number of dental providers willing to accept Medicaid," Stets said. "I understand why—it's hard to keep the lights on with love alone. On top of that, Medicaid billing and compliance are administratively burdensome, which increases costs even more."

Due to those financial challenges, only about 33% of all dental providers in the U.S. treat even one child covered by Medicaid, and just 18% of dental providers manage a Medicaid population

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that includes more than 100 child visits a year. This makes it hard for patients to find a dentist who will care for them.

In contrast, Benevis provides over a million patient appointments to underserved communities in 13 states and the District of Columbia each year. “I feel privileged to work for an organization that focuses on supporting the dental needs of disadvantaged families nationwide. Providing high-quality care to these patients within their communities is what wakes me up every morning and excites me to come to work,” Stets said.

Stets is encouraged that she sees more policies coming to life that focus on preventive dental care, especially for children and families. “States are starting to invest in rate increases to encourage more providers to take Medicaid, and we’ve seen positive changes.”

Stets shared examples of how some states are increasing access for pregnant and postpartum women to support the entire family’s oral health. “It’s crucial for pregnant women to get the right care, both during pregnancy and postpartum. If they receive care postpartum, they’re more likely to engage their children in early dental care as well,” Stets said. “We’re working with states like Texas, where dental homes are helping expectant moms get their preventive care. Virginia and Massachusetts are also leading in this space, and we’re partnering with Head Start programs to help moms and their kids. It’s important to get the message out that dental care for pregnant women is critical for their health and their child’s future dental health.”

More than policy, Stets enjoys being able to take part in Benevis’ mission in her day-to-day job, but also through service. Every year, the organization hosts Sharing Smiles Day in dozens of its offices to provide free care to uninsured or underinsured children and their families. The leadership team attends the event in different states.

“This year, I volunteered in Arizona, and it was so impactful. We treated a family with five children who put off care due to lack of coverage,” Stets said. “Being able to help families across the nation like this is something we’re really proud of, and it speaks to the dedication of our team members who volunteer their time.”

Learn more about Sharing Smiles Day, which typically occurs every May, at <https://sharingsmilesday.com/>.

About Benevis

Benevis is a leading dental healthcare delivery organization for practices focused on delivering life-changing oral care and orthodontics to underserved communities. Through comprehensive care and operational services that expand access to dentistry, Benevis has a 20-year history of providing the highest quality care to approximately 5 million children and adults. Its network reaches more than 100 locally branded dental offices across the U.S. that deliver treatment through 1.2 million visits each year. Benevis also advocates for programs and legislation that ensure all families have access to the oral healthcare they need and deserve.

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