



## Issue Brief

# Educate and Advocate: Oral Health During Pregnancy for Low-Income Women in California

Medi-Cal recipients and providers alike don't necessarily know that Medi-Cal benefits include dental benefits; even fewer are aware that pregnant women have exclusive oral health preventive benefits.

Through a First 5 LA Policy and Advocacy grant, Maternal and Child Health Access (MCHA) spearheaded the Oral Health Advocacy for Pregnant Women and Children project. Our findings and experiences are shared in this brief. We invite you to read this information since more than half (53%) of births in LA County are covered by Medi-Cal. This information is valuable and necessary for those who work with pregnant women.

We invite you to read the brief in its entirety and join us in advocating for more comprehensive dental benefits for pregnant women.

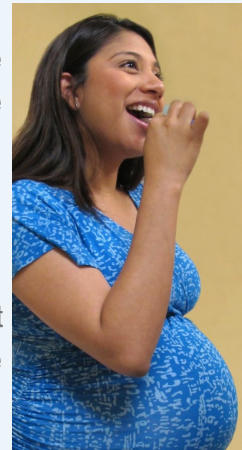
[Click on image to see brief](#)



Please visit our webpage for more information, dates of upcoming Dental Stakeholder meetings, resources (brochures and posters) and coming soon, videos from our first-ever

## Executive Summary

"Educate and Advocate: Oral Health During Pregnancy for Low-Income Women in California", highlights the multiple factors and barriers resulting in few low-income pregnant women accessing oral health care benefits.



The brief provides two important pieces of information that are the center of the issue of oral health during pregnancy:

- Medi-Cal benefits include dental benefits and;
- Pregnant women can safely access oral health

Because this information is not widely known, most low-income women go through their pregnancy without an oral health examination to even assess what may be needed, much less receive any treatment. Sadly, women may even experience pain from needed oral health services. Barriers such as an insufficient number of providers willing to treat pregnant women; complicated billing processes, low reimbursement rates; and pregnant women fearful of treatment, including x-rays, contribute to low numbers of pregnant women accessing oral health care.

The brief also calls out MCHA's advocacy win - that women with pregnancy-only Medi-Cal are included in the partial

oral health during  
pregnancy conference  
in Los Angeles.

In the coming  
weeks you'll be  
receiving our  
Oral Health  
Conference  
highlights  
video!

restoration of adult dental effective, May 1, 2014. (See the Denti-Cal bulletin Vol 30, #8, May, 2014.) Note that the sentence about "medically necessary" is misplaced and not meant to apply to pregnant women differently than all other adults. A clarification will be issued.

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