

## Issue Brief – Optional Medicaid Services

HEALTH – MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

DOH IB 08-16

### **SUMMARY**

Adult Dental and Adult Vision Services are two of the many optional services offered by Utah Medicaid. They are currently not funded with State General Fund as the match for federal Medicaid dollars. The Adult Dental is funded for FY 2007 with private contributions. Adult Vision Services are not provided for FY 2007. These optional services were restored in FY 2006 with one-time General Fund appropriations by the Legislature. This was not continued with State General Fund for FY 2007.

### **OBJECTIVE**

These building block requests seek an ongoing General Fund appropriation of \$2,800,000 to restore dental services and \$250,400 ongoing General Fund to restore vision services for Medicaid adults. Currently children and pregnant women who qualify for Medicaid can still receive dental services.

### **DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS**

During the budget reductions by the 2002 Legislature, the Adult Dental and Vision Services options were eliminated from Medicaid. This became effective June 1, 2002. There was no funding for these options for FY 2003 or FY 2004. The Legislature made an appropriation of \$1,000,000 one-time General Fund for FY 2005 for emergency dental services for adults. No funding was appropriated for vision services for FY 2005.

Medicaid is reimbursed on roughly a two to one match. This expands the number of people that can be treated.

#### ***Adult Dental Program Restoration***

The 2005 Legislature restored the program for adult dental services with a one-time appropriation of \$3,832,400 General Fund for FY 2006. This was matched with federal funds of \$9,433,100.

#### ***Adult Vision Program Restoration***

The 2005 Legislature restored the program for adult vision services with a one-time appropriation of \$1,126,600 General Fund for FY 2006. This was matched with federal funds of \$2,773,400. A key benefit that would be lost without the vision benefit is the ability for Medicaid clients to receive eye glasses.

### ***Policy Implications***

Providing adult vision or dental services is more than just a funding issue. It is a policy decision of the Legislature. The 2006 Legislature authorized a Medicaid Interim Committee to evaluate health and human service programs to determine how the growing Medicaid costs can be contained over the long-term. No clear recommendations have been made. Many states besides Utah are dealing with this growing funding issue. Cutting services is one of several options to reduce growing expenditures.

Advocates for the programs would argue that the services are not optional at all. Research does indicate links between dental hygiene and medical conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and low birth weight. It is not clear whether there is a cost/benefit from a strict accounting point of view. Some insurance companies are paying for both health and vision services because of the perceived benefit to their clients and company revenue.

### **LEGISLATIVE ACTION**

No funding is recommended for this building block. The Subcommittee will need to prioritize the General Fund level they feel is appropriate if they would like to restore these optional service benefits either with one-time funding or ongoing funding for FY 2008.

#### ***Funding considerations:***

Adult Dental Services	\$2,800,000 General Fund
	6,706,100 Federal Funds
Adult Vision Services	250,400 General Fund
	599,600 Federal Funds