

## **Media Package: Your Best July 1<sup>st</sup> Cuts Pitch Full Court Press Presentation OHAC Training, May 27, 2009**

*Dear OHAC Member,*

*On June 11, OHAC is organizing six press conferences in Mendocino, San Jose, SF, Merced, San Bernardino, and Santa Cruz on the local impact of the dental cuts. In addition, a report will be released specifically documenting the cuts' impact on adults, children, and providers. (Much of the content of that report has been included in the messaging and fact sheet of this packet.) In addition, a hearing on a lawsuit on optional benefits filed by CPCA could likely take place around the date of this event.*

*Some of you will be asked to participate in a press conference. For those of you, this packet and the accompanying training can guide you in your remarks at the conference and later to press. For those of you on your own to create a story about the cuts, these tools should enable you to develop and successfully pitch a story on the cuts local impact (without having to organize a press conference.)*

*Post-training, please feel free to contact us at Full Court Press for guidance on your July 1<sup>st</sup> efforts. My full contact information is located at the end of this package.*

*Sincerely,*

*Dan Cohen, Principal*

*Full Court Press Communications*

*Direct: 510-465-8294; [dan@fcpccommunications.com](mailto:dan@fcpccommunications.com)*

### **Your Best Pitch July 1<sup>st</sup> Cuts Pitch Contents:**

- Story Elements - Pitching a Story to A Local Health Reporter on July 1<sup>st</sup> Cuts
- "Dental clinic feels bite of state budget cut," Santa Cruz Sentinel, June 10, 2008
- Spokespeople key messages and talking points
- Template fact sheet/data\*
- Chart: Economic Impact by County and Region\*
- Chart: Impact on Federal Funding\*
- Customizable press release and pitch letter
- Sample letters to editor for local provider
- "Ideal components" for pitch to local reporter

\* Based on data and research by Joel Diringer, JD, MPH, [www.diringerassociates.com](http://www.diringerassociates.com) .

## Story Elements for Pitching a Local Reporter on July 1<sup>st</sup> Dental Cuts

- **Controversy.** The worse it is, the better for the media.
  - Dentist decides to not see any patients in protest.
- **Conflict.** Between groups of people, industries, issues or ideas.
  - Dentists call out legislators and Governor personally on decision to end dental care.
- **Problem/Solution Dynamic.** If you want to talk about a problem, YOU'D BETTER tell them a solution.
  - Dentists and supporting groups propose new way to cover Denti-Cal.
- **Timeliness & competitive advantage** (Is it an exclusive to that paper or TV station?).
  - What are you doing NOW to prepare to tell the story on July 1<sup>st</sup>?
- **Access to & reliability of sources** – often just knowing there is someone who can educate a reporter on an issue is reason enough for them to feel comfortable enough to do a story.
  - Are you available locally as an expert on dental cuts?
- **People/Personalities.** Large mistakes by little people or Small mistakes by big people.
  - \$10k dental bill that could have been prevented by one dental visit.
- **Dramatic Human Interest.** Include the stories of real people, their triumphs, tragedies, and anecdotes.
  - Parent who works third job and doesn't sleep to pay for aging parent's dental care.
- **Trends.** Stories that suggest new opinions, behavior patterns and attitudes. There is a trend; find at least three examples to assert that a new trend is emerging.
  - Third case of pregnant women transmitted bacteria to their unborn.
- **New Announcement.** "Unprecedented" or "groundbreaking" or "first-ever". Reporters are only interested in new news, not old news. Make it fresh.
  - New numbers of people whose dental care will not be covered.
- **Localize national story (and vice versa).** Take a nationally breaking story and emphasize its local impact.
  - New LOCAL numbers of people left without dental coverage.
- **Anniversaries/ Milestones.** One year later, 5 or 10.
- July 1<sup>st</sup> action taken by the legislature will become a harsh reality for xxx people in xxxx.

- **Fresh angle on old story.** Take old story add fresh twist.
  - New disease as a result of no dental care, diabetes, other illness from lack of dental care made worse in local area.
- **Stories.** Individuals, community leaders, or galvanizing spokespersons who may become news themselves.
  - Family of four can't afford dental care, parents work two jobs.
- **Special event.** A huge conference, rally, or gathering. Frame event to capture the issue and importance.
  - Gathering of county dental society.
- **Rapid Response.** React & OWN news others have made.
  - Reacting to July 1<sup>st</sup>, reacting to horror stories in other parts of the state.
- **Celebrity.** If you have a celebrity on your side, someone known in your community, make sure they are included in the story.
  - Find a celebrity or athlete who has benefitted from public dental health programs. (Ask your dentist colleagues.)
- **Strange Bedfellows.** Have unlikely allies come together in solidarity over your issue? Highlight it in your story.
- Dentists and orthodontists.

# Dental clinic feels bite of state budget cut

JONDI GUMZ - Sentinel staff writer

Article Launched: 06/10/2008 12:00:00 AM PDT



Dientes, the nonprofit clinic that provides dental care to people who can't afford it, faces an uncertain future. To balance the state budget, the governor proposes to eliminate funding for adult dental treatment and cutbacks in care for children.

"This is devastating for us," said Dr. Hugo Ferlito, a dentist with 35 years of experience who serves as Dientes' clinical director.

Dientes serves about 7,000 patients, people who qualify for state Medi-Cal funding, the homeless and others living in poverty. About 30 percent of the patients are children under 20; the proposed cut would mean treatment for conditions that cost more than \$1,000 won't be covered.

Dientes, founded 15 years ago, has a staff of 33 full-time employees. Besides four dentists and a hygienist, there are 10 dental assistants along with clerical staff.

Of the clinic's \$3 million budget, about \$1.2 million comes from Medi-Cal to pay for adult dental care.

"We are the safety net of dental care in Santa Cruz County," Ferlito said, noting that only seven dental offices in the county accept Medi-Cal patients.

When the state of Michigan stopped providing adult dental care, officials saw increased costs as more people sought help in hospital emergency rooms, according to Ferlito.

"They restored dental care but the provider network was gone," he said. "You can't just stop and start."

He plans to tap into the nonprofit's reserves to maintain the services.

"We're very concerned," added Alan McKay of the Central Coast Alliance for Health, quoting a former director of Dientes: "Please remember that the mouth is connected to the rest of the body."

Dental care is not part of the alliance health plan, but a lack of dental care could result in complications from other chronic diseases, McKay explained.

"The governor's proposed cuts to dental services are bad for adults, children, dentists, clinics, hospitals and schools," said Assemblyman John Laird, D-Santa Cruz. "We need to balance responsible cuts with new revenues. That's why the Assembly Budget Committee completely rejected the governor's cuts to adult dental services, restored rate cuts for dentists and increased the cap on children's dental services in the Healthy Families program. As we near final negotiations on the state budget, it's important that we continue to fight to minimize impacts to our dental safety net."

Contact Jondi Gumz at 706-3253 or [jgumz@santacruzsentinel.com](mailto:jgumz@santacruzsentinel.com).

## Spokespeople / Key Messages / Talking Points

# What Happens on July 1<sup>st</sup> When Dental Cuts Become a Reality?

- **It's OUR pain:** These massive cuts will cause many more of our families and communities to suffer serious consequences for years to come.
  - o Consequences felt across local economy & local employment
- **We can and must stop this now:** We have a faltering economy and millions of Californians need help now. We need to prepare for the future – and cutting critical preventive dental services isn't the way to a better future.
- **Do Something:** We need our local legislators to be part of the solution, not the problem. **Today.**

## Helpful Facts:

- Three million Californians lose dental care (3.2 million) – xxx residents of xxx County.
- The elderly, women of child-bearing age and people ill with diabetes and heart disease are at risk of severe and costly consequences.
- Many clinics and dentists throughout the state will be forced to close their doors, *(describe local county closures or reduction)*.
- When parents don't see dentist - children suffer. Kids are likely to lose dental care, miss school, and end up in emergency rooms.

- **California loses \$135 million in federal aid and \$500 million in economic activity which hurts our local economies and eliminates jobs.**

## **Helpful Facts with Additional Detail**

- **3.2 million adult Californians lose dental care.**
  - Adult coverage under Medi-Cal's Denti-Cal program will be completely eliminated.
- **The elderly, women of child-bearing age and people ill with diabetes and heart disease are at risk of severe and costly consequences.**
  - Poor oral health can have far-reaching consequences for people with serious diseases and conditions including diabetes, stroke, heart and respiratory disease.
  - Dental care for reproductive-age women. When they become pregnant, it can help prevent preterm and low-birth weight babies, who are exposed to their mother's oral bacteria in the womb.
- **When parents don't see dentists - children suffer. Kids are likely to lose dental care, miss school, and end up in emergency rooms.**
  - The elimination of adult coverage endangers the oral health of our children as well.
  - One study showed that when parents do not make at least one dental visit annually, their *children are 13 times less likely to visit a dentist.*
  - When clinics and dentists close their doors due to lost revenue, the children treated lose their dental care.
  - Children with good oral health are better learners and have less frequent school absences due to dental disease.
- **Many clinics and dentists throughout the state will be forced to close their doors, (*describe local county closures or reduction*).**
  - In an already-strained economy, an estimated xxx people in xxx County will lose their jobs due to the elimination of adult dental services.

- California community clinics estimate that they will lose \$56.6 million in revenue. With the diminished reimbursement, many clinics will face closure of their entire dental programs.
- The “cost-of-doing business” with Denti-Cal, unwieldy paperwork, low reimbursement rates and the elimination of payments for adults, is a disincentive for dentists to continue treating other Denti-Cal patients, including children.
- **California loses \$135 million in federal aid and other business which supports our local economies and provides jobs.**
  - By eliminating dental care for adults, the state forfeits \$134 million in federal funding.
  - In our county, losing xxx in federal funding, xxx in lost wages, and xxx economic activity.
  - Elimination of Adult Dental in California would result in nearly 17,000 additional emergency room visits for dental conditions in the first year alone, representing emergency room charges of more than \$11 million.
  - Local schools lose funding for every day a child is absent from school with dental pain.

# Reporter Fact Sheet

## What Happens on July 1st When Dental Cuts Become a Reality?

Dental Cuts in our Community Mean Jobs/Wages Lost and the Loss of Economic Activity

	Our Community	Statewide
Lost Federal Matching Funds		\$134,500,000
Lost Jobs		4,200 (Dentists & supporting industries)
Lost Wages		\$205,000,000
Lost Economic Activity		\$516,000,000

- Due to the multiplier effects of cuts in Medi-Cal spending, the detrimental impact on California’s economy will be even greater, exceeding \$500 million.** The elimination of Adult Dental services at the estimated cost of \$218.7 million in combined federal and state spending will cause the loss of an estimated 4,240 jobs, \$205.5 million in wages, and \$516.1 million in business activity as the effects of the cuts impact dental offices, dental suppliers, consumer consumption and tax receipts.<sup>i</sup>
- California will lose \$134.5 million in federal matching dollars each year.** By eliminating the Adult Dental program with estimated state general fund “savings” of \$109.3 million<sup>ii</sup>, California will achieve only a minor reduction in state outlays (less than 2% of the entire \$36.6 billion Medi-Cal budget is spent on *all* dental services) while causing the loss of at least \$134.5 million of federal matching funds.<sup>iii</sup>

**Entire dental programs will close.** California community clinics estimate that they will lose \$56.5 million in revenue with the loss of the Adult Dental program, accounting for 407,000 visits annually.<sup>iv</sup> With diminished reimbursement, many clinics will face closure of their entire dental programs, including services for children. Similarly, State’s dental schools, which rely on Medi-Cal revenue, will be short of funds to treat patients and train new dentists.

- Immediate cost savings will be lost as untreated decay and disease increases.** Whatever savings may accrue in the first year of the elimination of Adult Dental, they are likely to diminish over time as untreated dental disease becomes more prevalent. Unable to afford dental treatment out-of-pocket, many beneficiaries will likely delay treatment, thereby making treatment more complex and expensive.
- Lack of access to oral health care increases emergency room use, at greater cost to the health care system.** Based on the experience of Maryland which eliminated Medicaid reimbursement to dentists treating adults in 1993,<sup>v</sup> and charges for dental-related emergency room services in California,<sup>vi</sup> elimination of Adult Dental in California would result in nearly 17,000 additional emergency room visits for dental conditions in the first year alone, representing emergency room charges of more than \$11 million.

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<sup>i</sup> The US Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis has developed multipliers in its Regional Input-Output Modeling System (RIMS II) to estimate the impact of changes in a regional economy. California specific multipliers have been developed for various industries including one for physician and dental offices. According to the most recent multipliers for 2006, every \$1 million in dental offices supports 19.4 jobs, every \$1 change in dental offices affects \$2.36 in economic activity, and every \$1 generates \$.94 in salaries. <https://www.bea.gov/regional/rims/>; See also, Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured, *The Role of Medicaid in State Economies: A Look at the Research*, January 2009. Available at: <http://www.kff.org/medicaid/7075a.cfm>, Accessed on March 10, 2009.

<sup>ii</sup> California Department of Health Care Services November 2008 Medi-Cal Estimate Policy Change Number 164. [http://www.dhcs.ca.gov/dataandstats/reports/mceestimates/Documents/2008\\_nov\\_estimate/NOV08\\_RE\\_G02\\_Reg\\_PC\\_Narr.pdf](http://www.dhcs.ca.gov/dataandstats/reports/mceestimates/Documents/2008_nov_estimate/NOV08_RE_G02_Reg_PC_Narr.pdf). Accessed March 19, 2009. Total Adult Dental savings is estimated to be \$218,738,000, half of which is state general fund.

<sup>iii</sup> The current federal contribution for Medi-Cal spending is 50%, but will increase to approximately 61.6% under the recently signed federal economic stimulus legislation.

<sup>iv</sup> California Primary Care Association. *The Impact of the Proposed Elimination of Medi-Cal Adult Dental Services on the Clinic Safety Net*. CPCA. Spring 2008.

<sup>v</sup> Leonard A. Cohen, Richard J. Manski, and Frank J. Hooper, "Does the Elimination of Medicaid Reimbursement Affect the Frequency of Emergency Department Dental Visits?" *J.Am.Dent.Assoc.* 1999 May; 127(5): 605-609.

<sup>vi</sup> Even with adult Denti-Cal in place, California experienced more than 83,000 emergency room visits for "ambulatory care sensitive" dental conditions in 2007. About 80% of all emergency department visits in 2005-2007 were for adults ages 18-64 at a charge of \$660 per visit. (Maiuro L and Finocchio L. *Emergency Department Visits and Hospitalizations for Ambulatory Care Sensitive Dental Conditions: Preliminary Results from Forthcoming Report*. California HealthCare Foundation. December 2008.)

Estimates of economic impact of eliminating Medi-Cal Adult Dental

County	Adult Medi-Cal*	% of total	Lost Wages	Lost economic activity	Lost jobs
All	3,171,376		\$205,500,000	\$516,100,000	4240
Alameda	118,720	3.7%	\$7,692,863	\$19,320,129	159
Alpine	82	0.0%	\$5,313.47	\$13,344	0
Amador	1,898	0.1%	\$122,987	\$308,875	3
Butte	24,074	0.8%	\$1,559,956	\$3,917,729	32
Calaveras	2,805	0.1%	\$181,759	\$456,477	4
Colusa	1,910	0.1%	\$123,765	\$310,828	3
Contra Costa	59,761	1.9%	\$3,872,415	\$9,725,322	80
Del Norte	4,078	0.1%	\$264,248	\$663,641	5
El Dorado	8,153	0.3%	\$528,301	\$1,326,794	11
Fresno	121,725	3.8%	\$7,887,582	\$19,809,153	163
Glenn	3,053	0.1%	\$197,829	\$496,836	4
Humboldt	13,779	0.4%	\$892,857	\$2,242,352	18
Imperial	25,891	0.8%	\$1,677,695	\$4,213,422	35
Inyo	1,589	0.1%	\$102,965	\$258,589	2
Kern	87,386	2.8%	\$5,662,470	\$14,220,930	117
Kings	13,373	0.4%	\$866,549	\$2,176,281	18
Lake	8,615	0.3%	\$558,238	\$1,401,979	12
Lassen	2,518	0.1%	\$163,162	\$409,772	3
Los Angeles	1,071,743	33.8%	\$69,447,201	\$174,412,168	1433
Madera	15,914	0.5%	\$1,031,201	\$2,589,796	21
Marin	10,936	0.3%	\$708,635	\$1,779,691	15
Mariposa	1,309	0.0%	\$84,821	\$213,023	2
Mendocino	10,297	0.3%	\$667,229	\$1,675,702	14
Merced	31,169	1.0%	\$2,019,700	\$5,072,347	42
Modoc	1,122	0.0%	\$72,704	\$182,591	2
Mono	467	0.0%	\$30,261	\$75,998	1
Monterey	33,104	1.0%	\$2,145,085	\$5,387,243	44
Napa	6,835	0.2%	\$442,897	\$1,112,307	9
Nevada	4,967	0.2%	\$321,854	\$808,314	7
Orange	180,064	5.7%	\$11,667,854	\$29,303,063	241
Placer	12,986	0.4%	\$841,472	\$2,113,302	17
Plumas	1,496	0.0%	\$96,938	\$243,454	2
Riverside	132,810	4.2%	\$8,605,872	\$21,613,092	178
Sacramento	138,912	4.4%	\$9,001,271	\$22,606,113	186
San Benito	3,606	0.1%	\$233,663	\$586,829	5
San Bernardino	163,245	5.1%	\$10,578,010	\$26,565,990	218
San Diego	174,990	5.5%	\$11,339,067	\$28,477,336	234
San Francisco	84,975	2.7%	\$5,506,242	\$13,828,571	114
San Joaquin	69,091	2.2%	\$4,476,984	\$11,243,657	92
San Luis Obispo	14,574	0.5%	\$944,371	\$2,371,728	19
San Mateo	35,203	1.1%	\$2,281,097	\$5,728,828	47
Santa Barbara	31,343	1.0%	\$2,030,975	\$5,100,664	42
Santa Clara	126,437	4.0%	\$8,192,912	\$20,575,969	169
Santa Cruz	18,753	0.6%	\$1,215,164	\$3,051,806	25
Shasta	19,782	0.6%	\$1,281,841	\$3,219,262	26
Sierra	245	0.0%	\$15,876	\$39,871	0
Siskiyou	5,329	0.2%	\$345,311	\$867,225	7
Solano	29,607	0.9%	\$1,918,485	\$4,818,152	40
Sonoma	26,090	0.8%	\$1,690,590	\$4,245,807	35
Stanislaus	54,324	1.7%	\$3,520,107	\$8,840,521	73
Sutter	9,700	0.3%	\$628,544	\$1,578,548	13
Tehama	7,299	0.2%	\$472,963	\$1,187,817	10
Trinity	1,585	0.0%	\$102,705	\$257,938	2
Tulare	63,410	2.0%	\$4,108,865	\$10,319,149	85
Tuolumne	4,018	0.1%	\$260,360	\$653,877	5
Ventura	51,990	1.6%	\$3,368,867	\$8,460,693	70
Yolo	13,608	0.4%	\$881,776	\$2,214,524	18
Yuba	8,631	0.3%	\$559,275	\$1,404,582	12

\*As of October 2008

Estimates do not take into account pregnant women or those in nursing homes, nor do they account for differences in utilization in each county.

Region	Adult Medi-Cal*	% of total	Lost Wages	Lost economic activity	Lost jobs
Northern-Sierra	140,648	4.4%	\$9,113,761	\$22,888,624	188
Greater Bay Area	498,564	15.7%	\$32,263,500	\$81,027,700	666
Sacramento region	173,659	5.5%	\$11,302,500	\$28,385,500	233
San Joaquin Valley	456,392	14.4%	\$29,592,000	\$74,318,400	611
Central Coast	153,370	4.8%	\$9,864,000	\$24,772,800	204
Los Angeles	1,071,743	33.8%	\$69,447,201	\$174,412,168	1433
Other Southern CA	677,000	21.3%	\$43,155,000	\$108,381,000	890

Economic impacts: Estimates calculated by multiplying total lost funding statewide by US Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis Regional Input-Output Modeling System multipliers. County estimates are calculated by dividing the statewide lost economic activity by the adult Medi-Cal population in each county.

\*totals may not add due to rounding

Regions are those used by the CA Health Interview Survey [www.chis.ucla.edu](http://www.chis.ucla.edu)

Estimates of impact on Federal funding in eliminating Medi-Cal Adult Dental

County	Adult Medi-Cal*	% of total	50% FMAP*	New FMAP (61.6%)
All	3,171,376		\$109,369,000	\$134,742,608
Alameda	118,720	3.7%	\$4,094,213	\$5,044,070
Alpine	82	0.0%	\$2,827.88	\$3,484
Amador	1,898	0.1%	\$65,455	\$80,641
Butte	24,074	0.8%	\$830,223	\$1,022,835
Calaveras	2,805	0.1%	\$96,734	\$119,176
Colusa	1,910	0.1%	\$65,869	\$81,150
Contra Costa	59,761	1.9%	\$2,060,935	\$2,539,072
Del Norte	4,078	0.1%	\$140,635	\$173,262
El Dorado	8,153	0.3%	\$281,167	\$346,397
Fresno	121,725	3.8%	\$4,197,844	\$5,171,744
Glenn	3,053	0.1%	\$105,287	\$129,713
Humboldt	13,779	0.4%	\$475,187	\$585,430
Imperial	25,891	0.8%	\$892,885	\$1,100,034
Inyo	1,589	0.1%	\$54,799	\$67,512
Kern	87,386	2.8%	\$3,013,619	\$3,712,779
Kings	13,373	0.4%	\$461,185	\$568,180
Lake	8,615	0.3%	\$297,099	\$366,026
Lassen	2,518	0.1%	\$86,836	\$106,983
Los Angeles	1,071,743	33.8%	\$36,960,442	\$45,535,265
Madera	15,914	0.5%	\$548,815	\$676,140
Marin	10,936	0.3%	\$377,142	\$464,639
Mariposa	1,309	0.0%	\$45,143	\$55,616
Mendocino	10,297	0.3%	\$355,105	\$437,490
Merced	31,169	1.0%	\$1,074,903	\$1,324,281
Modoc	1,122	0.0%	\$38,694	\$47,671
Mono	467	0.0%	\$16,105	\$19,841
Monterey	33,104	1.0%	\$1,141,634	\$1,406,493
Napa	6,835	0.2%	\$235,714	\$290,399
Nevada	4,967	0.2%	\$171,293	\$211,033
Orange	180,064	5.7%	\$6,209,740	\$7,650,399
Placer	12,986	0.4%	\$447,839	\$551,738
Plumas	1,496	0.0%	\$51,591	\$63,561
Riverside	132,810	4.2%	\$4,580,124	\$5,642,713
Sacramento	138,912	4.4%	\$4,790,560	\$5,901,970
San Benito	3,606	0.1%	\$124,358	\$153,209
San Bernardino	163,245	5.1%	\$5,629,715	\$6,935,809
San Diego	174,990	5.5%	\$6,034,756	\$7,434,820
San Francisco	84,975	2.7%	\$2,930,473	\$3,610,342
San Joaquin	69,091	2.2%	\$2,382,692	\$2,935,477
San Luis Obispo	14,574	0.5%	\$502,603	\$619,207
San Mateo	35,203	1.1%	\$1,214,021	\$1,495,674
Santa Barbara	31,343	1.0%	\$1,080,904	\$1,331,674
Santa Clara	126,437	4.0%	\$4,360,343	\$5,371,943
Santa Cruz	18,753	0.6%	\$646,721	\$796,761
Shasta	19,782	0.6%	\$682,208	\$840,480
Sierra	245	0.0%	\$8,449	\$10,409
Siskiyou	5,329	0.2%	\$183,777	\$226,414
Solano	29,607	0.9%	\$1,021,036	\$1,257,916
Sonoma	26,090	0.8%	\$899,747	\$1,108,489
Stanislaus	54,324	1.7%	\$1,873,433	\$2,308,070
Sutter	9,700	0.3%	\$334,517	\$412,125
Tehama	7,299	0.2%	\$251,715	\$310,113
Trinity	1,585	0.0%	\$54,661	\$67,342
Tulare	63,410	2.0%	\$2,186,776	\$2,694,108
Tuolumne	4,018	0.1%	\$138,566	\$170,713
Ventura	51,990	1.6%	\$1,792,942	\$2,208,905
Yolo	13,608	0.4%	\$469,289	\$578,165
Yuba	8,631	0.3%	\$297,651	\$366,706

DHCS estimate of saving of \$218,738,000

Estimates do not take into account pregnant women or those in nursing homes, nor do they account for differences in utilization in each county.

Region	Adult Medi-Cal*	% of total	50% FMAP*	New FMAP (61.6%)
Northern-Sierra	140,648	4.4%	\$4,850,428	\$5,975,727
Greater Bay Area	498,564	15.7%	\$17,193,624	\$21,182,545
Sacramento region	173,659	5.5%	\$5,988,855	\$7,378,269
San Joaquin Valley	456,392	14.4%	\$15,739,268	\$19,390,778
Central Coast	153,370	4.8%	\$5,289,163	\$6,516,248
Los Angeles	1,071,743	33.8%	\$36,960,442	\$45,535,265
Other Southern CA	677,000	21.3%	\$23,347,220	\$28,763,775

Federal funding: Estimates calculated by dividing the total statewide lost federal matching funds by the adult Medi-Cal population in each county

\*totals may not add due to rounding

Regions are those used by the CA Health Interview Survey [www.chis.ucla.edu](http://www.chis.ucla.edu)

# Customizable Press Release

(LOGO)

**DATE**

**For Immediate Release**

**Contact:** You – office, cell phone, and email address

## **What Happens on July 1st When Dental Cuts Become a Reality?**

*3.2 million Californians lose access to dental care including XXXX in our community – but we all feel the pain of \$516 million of lost economic activity & \$205 million in lost wages*

(City) – California’s Denti-Cal program is set to be eliminated on July 1. In (county), these cuts will trigger an economic avalanche that includes the loss of (xxx) local jobs and \$\$ in our local economy.

But that’s not the worst of it. Estimates of economic impact of eliminating Medi-Cal Adult Dental across the state include the loss of \$516 million in economic activity, \$205 million in lost wages for dental personnel and the loss of coverage for nearly 3.2 million Californians.

“This really impacts all of us,” said (local provider). “While thousands of (county) residents will lose access to dental care and hundreds will lose jobs, all of us will feel the impact of more than \$500 million in lost economic activity when these cuts are enacted.” (he/she) added.

Many clinics and dentists throughout the state will either be forced to close their doors or severely curtail access to their services. Here in (county), (Describe one local impact)

Denti-Cal is a program under the state Medi-cal coverage. It provides access to dental services for California’s working poor and frail adults. By eliminating this program, our community, including families, children and business owners, will suffer serious consequences.

- California loses \$135 million in federal matching funds to help cover adults. Losses which hurt our local economies and eliminate jobs. In addition, closing Adult Dental in California would result in nearly 17,000 additional emergency room visits for dental conditions in the first year alone, representing emergency room charges of more than \$11 million.
- When parents don’t see dentist - children suffer. Kids are less likely to receive dental care, miss school, and end up in emergency rooms. A recent study shows kids are 13 times less likely to see a dentist when their parent has not seen one for a year. And for everyday that kids aren’t in school, our communities lose needed state and federal funds.
- The elderly, women of child-bearing age and people ill with diabetes and heart disease are at risk. Poor oral health has far reaching consequences, including the introduction of heightened dangerous bacteria in the blood system.

“We can and must stop the closure of the Adult Denti-cal program and we need our local legislators to help, today,” Said (advocate/dentist). “It’s bad enough to lose jobs, but it’s worse to know that lives will be impacted for years to come, because of the decision today.”

The economic impact on our region can be broken down as follows.

(Insert County-level and region-specific data)

“Unless our elected leaders step up to solve this problem, we can foresee nothing but pain for 3.2 million Californians and a ripple effect that will last across generations,” added (name).

# # #

About (Local Group)

## Pitch Letter

Dear (Reporter),

Budget cuts are everywhere. There are few budget cuts that are as invisible, yet widely felt as cuts to Denti-Cal, California's adult dental coverage program for the working poor and frail.

I see this everyday in my job as a (dentist, other).

When the program is eliminated on July 1, we'll lose (xxx) jobs and (xxxxxx) in funding in our community. In addition, everyone with existing dental insurance or the ability to see a dentist will eventually feel the effects.

We have some very powerful local stories we'd like to share with you as you seek to identify some powerful news items. Some include

- Story 1 in a sentence
- Story 2 in a sentence

Please contact me if we can be of any assistance.

## **SAMPLE LETTERS TO THE EDITORS**

### *Diabetics at Risk*

Dental cuts are coming on July 1. We need to stop them any way we can. One of the unseen dangers for diabetics is that without dental care, oral bacteria can pose a severe risk to their health. Managing diabetes is hard enough, especially for children, working parents and elderly. We should all work to ensure that all adults in our community have access to dental care.

### *Unborn Children & Dental Care*

On July 1, if dental care cuts are allowed to go through in our state's budget, we may be putting the unborn at risk. Exposure to oral bacteria that makes its way through the bloodstream is a cause of premature births and low-birth weight babies. In our community, xx,xxx adults face the loss of access to dental care. We should all work to prevent this from happening.

### *Kids at Risk When Parents Don't See A Dentist.*

Regardless of how you may feel about using public funds to cover dental care for adults – think about the kids. If a parent doesn't visit the dentist once a year, their children are 13 times less likely to see one as well. Think about it – even if the children have access, they are less likely to go. That means more unnecessary pain, missed school days and a lifetime of oral health problems – just because parents don't have access today. Please join me in opposing the budget cuts for dental health coverage.

### *Jobs, Jobs, Jobs...and teeth?*

It's the economy, right? Oh, and dental health. One of the unseen casualties of this year's budget debacle is that we have/will lose xx,xxx jobs in our county. When we as a state don't cover working families, we lose federal funds that help supplement their coverage. This leads to lost jobs and fewer dentists for all of us in our community. Plus, if a working adult doesn't have dental coverage – they will go to the emergency room for even greater oral health issues. Let's be sure we focus on what's important – and fight the dental cuts.

### *Jobs Part Deux*

Cuts to dental care programs by Sacramento will mean lost jobs here at home. In our community alone, dental cuts will cost xx,xxx their preventive dental coverage and mean that we'll see \$xxxx lost to our community. Without those funds, dental clinics will close and dentists will employ fewer support staff. Our community is under siege right now. The last thing we need to do is to cut dental care and promote greater unemployment.

### *Public Dental Program Affect Everyone?*

Think cuts to the adult Denti-Cal program don't impact you? Do you have an aging parent? Do you know anyone with a chronic medical condition? Almost 100% of the frail persons in our community are reliant on Denti-Cal for their oral health care. So, if you have a mother, a father, a sister or a friend in health care distress, they will likely lose their ability to see a dentist. This means more pain, more unnecessary visits to the emergency room and possibly early death. So please, fight the cuts to dental health access. It impacts us all.

## Review: **Ideal Components for Reporter**

### MAKE IT REAL

- Think about all of the ways you can make the dental cuts, very large and impersonal story, REAL for reporters and consumers of news
- Identify faces and stories who will be affected by the cuts
- Get creative – think about all the “visuals” that you have to offer (50 moms smiling for the camera?)

### FIND A FACE

- Reporters want to tie a story to one person, no matter how large or vast the impact.
- Find a family with a compelling story – preferably one that reflects the nature of your community
- Be sure to provide the family some background about they key messages on the dental cuts, and help them understand the critical role they are playing in helping you shape the message about the cuts – plus a trained interviewee makes for a better story.

### PROVIDE A PLACE

- Be sure the story is ROOTED in your community.
- Identify local places that everyone knows to host your reporter
- Make sure you limit to one place where the reporter can get everything they need (clinic, dental office, park/school)

### ACQUIRE AN EXPERT

- Find a third party who will add a stamp of credibility to what you are saying
- Ideally, a professor, economist or public policy expert
- Goal: Have them Validate what you are saying

### GO TO THE MEDIA – Don’t wait for them to come to you

- Offer yourself as an expert to morning shows (radio & TV) and early AM/mid-day TV newscasts
- You will be the LOCAL face on a statewide story
- Bring a success story with you (even a person)

**Contact Information:**

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**Bio:**

**Dan Cohen** founded Full Court Press in 2001 with a vision of providing public relations, public affairs and crisis counsel to companies, foundations and non-profits who wish to use strategic communications to make social change.

Dan is a veteran public relations, political communications and media strategist. He applied his belief in brand building public relations to all of the General Mills Brands including Wheaties, Cheerios, Box Tops for Education & Betty Crocker. His work at General Mills in the mid-1990's was recognized by the Wall Street Journal as being on the forefront of leveraging brands to greater PR success.

Dan was a political consultant for initiatives and Democratic candidates for offices from mayor to Congress. He was recently named by the East Bay Business Journal as one of its "40 under 40," and serves on the Board of Directors of Alameda County Meals on Wheels. Dan is a licensed attorney but chooses to practice strategic communications ... his passion.