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Access to Oral Health Care Greatly Improved with Restoration of Medicaid Adult Dental Benefit

Michigan Primary Care Association (MPCA) and Community Health Centers across the state thank Governor Granholm and the Michigan Legislature for passing the Michigan Department of Community Health budget that will restore funding for Medicaid adult dental services in fiscal year 2011.

“The dental benefit under Medicaid enables thousands of Michigan residents to access the care they need to maintain not only oral health but also overall health,” said Kim Sibilsky, Executive Director, MPCA.

Good oral health care is extremely important in preventing, diagnosing, and treating both oral health and primary health care needs of patients. Lack of good oral health has been shown to cause pre-term births, low birth weight, difficulty controlling diabetes, an increased risk of heart attack and stroke, and needless pain and suffering.

What’s more, providing preventive care makes wise use of Michigan’s limited resources, as preventive care costs much less than restorative care. People with untreated dental disease often end up in hospital emergency rooms, which is far more costly than seeing a dentist. This was the case in the first six months following elimination of the Medicaid adult dental benefit in 2003, when Medicaid emergency room visits related to oral health increased 11% compared to the same six-month period the previous year.

On behalf of Michigan Community Health Centers and their patients, Michigan Primary Care Association is deeply grateful to the Governor and the Michigan Legislature, especially to Senator Roger Kahn and Representative Gary McDowell, for their leadership in ensuring many of this state’s most vulnerable adults will have access to quality dental care.

About Michigan Primary Care Association

Michigan Primary Care Association has been the voice for Community Health Centers and other community-based providers in Michigan since 1980. It is a leader in building a healthy society in which all residents have convenient and affordable access to quality health care. MPCA’s mission is to promote, support, and develop comprehensive, accessible, and affordable quality community-based primary care services to everyone in Michigan. For more information, please visit www.mpca.net or call 517.381.8000.

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