



Photo credit: Mickey Nye

POLICY BRIEF

Healthcare Practitioner Credentialing

Choosing a dental practice that meets your family's needs and accepts your insurance can be a challenge. For many Pennsylvanians that challenge can feel like a crisis.

The Commonwealth has a critical dental practitioner shortage in 48 out of its 67 counties. Reversing Pennsylvania's dentist shortage requires a competitive business climate to attract and retain practitioners — especially in rural areas.

At present, **less than 50% of Pennsylvania's dental school graduates choose to practice here.** They often cite a preference to practice in other states where dental insurers treat dentists more fairly.

To accept insurance coverage for patients, Pennsylvania dentists must complete the credentialing process of individual commercial insurance carriers and Medical Assistance managed care companies to receive reimbursement for the services that they provide to their patients.

Current credentialing processes may take many months to complete and results in practitioners either delaying their start date or having the administrative burden of seeking reimbursement retroactively after their application is approved.



We are a pediatric practice, and many we times are replacing dentists with new residency grads. By the time they can practice, it takes 4-6 months for insurance to credential them. Meanwhile, we must defer treatment on literally hundreds of patients. -- Dr. R

Standardizing the credentialing process will improve the business climate for the Commonwealth's health care workforce, prevent untimely delays for practitioners who are ready to start practicing, and free up their time to focus more on patient care.

The **Healthcare Practitioner Credentialing Act** would standardize the credentialing process and prevent untimely delays for health care providers who are ready to start practicing in Pennsylvania.

This legislation will:

- ☐ Reduce administrative hurdles by requiring the use of the standardized **Council for Affordable Quality Healthcare (CAQH)** credentialing system for both applicants and insurers.
- ☐ Improve communication by requiring insurers to notify health care practitioners within a reasonable amount of time if more information is needed to complete an application.
- ☐ Limit the credentialing period for complete applications.
- ☐ Streamline the process for health practitioners practicing in multiple locations.

Pennsylvania must act now! The shortage of dentists is already a crisis. Common sense insurance reforms like the Healthcare Practitioner Credentialing Act will invite more dental school graduates to stay and dedicate their focus to expanding patient care.

Improving the credentialing process is among several reforms being championed by PDA that would improve patient access to critical dental care in the Commonwealth.

Questions or concerns?

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