

# 2025 advocacy highlights

BY OLIVIA ANDERSON

In 2025, the ADA drove major insurance reforms nationwide. Federally, the ADA pushed back on questionable insurer practices and sought greater payer scrutiny. The Association had legislation introduced — H.R. 1521, the Dental Optometric Care Access Act of 2025 — and secured 93 co-sponsors. In the states, the ADA supported 40 successful state-level reform campaigns, and secured key changes to the National Council of Insurance Legislators *Transparency in Dental Benefits Contracting*

*Model Act*. The Association advanced tax relief for small dental businesses and helped restore the pass through entity tax deduction, guaranteeing tax parity for small business dental practices. The ADA supported key provisions in the National Defense Authorization Act to strengthen military dental care. A number of states saw meaningful Medicaid changes across the country. Additionally, ADA advocacy helped protect community water fluoridation and prescription fluoride supplements. Here is an infographic sampling some of the Association's 2025 wins. For a full breakdown, visit [ADA.org/Advocacy](https://ada.org/Advocacy). ■



## ADVOCACY MILESTONES

- The ADA pushed for the extension of crucial small business tax provisions in the budget reconciliation bill. Due to ADA advocacy:
  - **The pass-through entity tax deduction was restored, guaranteeing tax parity for small business dental practices and protecting dentists from a 1.5%-5% tax hike.**
  - The bill includes a permanent 20% small business income deduction, restoration of 100% bonus depreciation, new domestic research tax incentives, the preservation of a 21% corporate tax rate, and a \$40,000 individual state and local tax deduction.
- The ADA defended critical oral health funding for the CDC, HRSA, NIDCR and IHS to pass a bill with strong investments in programs essential to dentistry, funding for dental research and oral health efforts.
- Congress passed the National Defense Authorization Act, which included an ADA-supported provision, sponsored by Rep. Brian Babin, D.D.S., R-Texas, to strengthen accreditation standards for military dental treatment facilities to help ensure the highest standard of care for service members.



## DENTAL INSURANCE REFORMS

- The ADA has successfully encouraged 93 co-sponsors of H.R. 1521, or the Dental and Optometric Care Access Act of 2025.
- **With ADA support, both strategic and financial, state dental societies were successful in 40 dental insurance reform campaigns in 2025.** Thirty-nine new laws passed and one legislative effort was successful in preventing the loss of an important, long-standing claim payment statutory protection.
- The National Council of Insurance Legislators made two ADA-supported changes to the Transparency in Dental Benefits Contracting Model Act, first adopted in 2020. Should the new language be adopted in a state, the insurer must first get dentists' express permission prior to using virtual credit card payment methods that require dentists to pay a fee to collect claim payment. Second, dentists' election on payment methods remains active until the dentist changes it or a new contract is executed.



## WORKFORCE

- Twelve states have enacted legislation to join the Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact. The states are Nebraska, Arkansas, Colorado, Iowa, Maine, Minnesota, Ohio, Kansas, Tennessee, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin.
- The ADA authored the Dental Access Model Act, which supports the expansion of access to dental care, as a roadmap to help upskill dental team members.
- **The ADA has advocated to protect more than \$50 million in appropriated federal funding for workforce recruitment and development initiatives.**
- ADA advocated for bill introduction and secured 80 bipartisan cosponsors in the House of Representatives and Senate for the Resident Education Deferred Interest Act (REDI Act) to allow medical and dental students to defer payments on federal student loans and delay interest accrual until after completing their residency programs.



## MEDICAID REFORMS

- **At least 15 states adopted Medicaid changes significant for those providing or seeking dental care.**
- Twelve states enacted laws or policies that adopted meaningful changes for Medicaid dental care, resulting in higher reimbursements or other advancements such as increased annual spending limits for adults.
- At least three states improved program offerings such as extending post-partum dental care for enrollees and expanding the number of adults eligible for dental care.



## COMMUNITY WATER FLUORIDATION

- **ADA-led efforts averted an FDA ban on the use of prescription fluoride supplements.** Instead, the FDA took the lesser action of telling companies to restrict use in children under age 3 or older children who were not at high risk for tooth decay.
- The ADA convinced the Trump Administration to continue the Biden Administration's appeal of the EPA lawsuit and filed an amicus brief in support of the Environmental Protection Agency's appeal of the court order directing the agency to further regulate the fluoridation of public water systems.
- **Of 23 governments proposing to end or limit fluoridation, 16 states rejected the idea. Some states filed several bills, all of which were rejected.**