

## Commonwealth of Virginia

### Department of Medical Assistance Services

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## Commonwealth of Virginia Celebrates 20 Years of Cardinal Care Smiles

### *A Milestone in Expanding Access to Dental Health for Medicaid Members*

RICHMOND – The Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) are proud to celebrate a meaningful milestone. 20 years of Cardinal Care Smiles, the state's Medicaid dental program that has helped brighten the lives and health of millions of Virginians.

What began in 2005 to expand access to dental care for children has grown into something far greater: a comprehensive program supporting children, pregnant individuals, and adults across the Commonwealth.

The 20th anniversary of Cardinal Care Smiles represents two decades of sustained investment in oral health—a key component of overall well-being—and highlights the power of partnership with our Dental Advisory Committee to create lasting public health impact.

Regular dental check-ups and preventive care help avoid cavities, gum disease, and other serious health conditions like heart disease and diabetes. But without access to dental services, many individuals—especially those in underserved areas—are left without these essential protections. Limited access often leads to untreated issues, increased pain, and costly emergency visits. Cardinal Care Smiles promotes oral health and improves access to care—critical steps toward reducing health disparities and enhancing quality of life for all.

Today, Cardinal Care Smiles offers a wide range of services from preventive and diagnostic care to restorative, surgical, and emergency treatments. The program also promotes oral health awareness among children through education. Behind this success are thousands of dedicated dental professionals, community partners, and stakeholders who continue to shape the program with compassion and collaboration.

“This program has transformed lives,” said **Cheryl Roberts, Director of DMAS**. “We’re celebrating the stories, the smiles, and the outcomes that come from prioritizing oral health. We are grateful to every provider and partner—past, present, and future—who has helped us reach this moment.”

The 20th anniversary is also a time to reflect on the visionaries who made it possible, including Dr. Terry Dickinson and Patrick Finnerty, whose leadership helped lay the foundation for lasting partnerships and long-term impact. Their legacy lives on through every smile the program makes possible.



Governor Glenn Youngkin, Secretary of Health and Human Resources Janet Kelly, and Secretary of the Commonwealth Kelly Gee commemorated the anniversary with an official proclamation, recognizing Cardinal Care Smiles as a vital part of Virginia's public health achievements over the past two decades.

As we look to the future, DMAS remains committed to building on this legacy, expanding access, and continuing to deliver quality care that makes a real difference in people's lives.

Cardinal Care Smiles: 20 Years of Impact. Countless Reasons to Smile.