



OPEN House

Quarterly Network Orientation

June 5, 2025



Agenda

1

New Member Welcome

Newcomer
Introductions

3

Committee Updates

Purpose and
progress from each
OPEN Committee

5

Regional Breakouts

An opportunity
to reflect in small
groups.

2

OPEN Overview

Our work to advance oral
health equity for all.

4

Topical Breakouts

Share and learn
listening session

OPEN Introductions

Welcome Newcomers!

Come off mute to share:

- Name, Organization, State
- What brought you to OPEN?

Or type it in the chat!

Housekeeping:

- Today's meeting is being recorded
- All lines muted upon entry
- Share questions & comments in the chat box
- Recording & slides provided post-event
- If comfortable, please add your pronouns to your Zoom name

How do members describe OPEN?

"The Network is the premier space to stay engaged with oral health issues and initiatives, and work with leaders across the US representing a diverse array of public health and consumer interests to build and advance frameworks for change together."

"OPEN recognizes that every voice is needed and wanted at the table; no one person or organization has all the answers or resources for the future but together we can move toward a more just, inclusive society by sharing the wealth and fighting with one voice for equality for all."

"We bring people together to bridge relationships; we work together in a safe environment to educate and validate one another, and we explore what the future might look like when we bring every voice to the table of inclusion."



OPEN, an initiative of CareQuest Institute for Oral Health, is a diverse network of individuals and entities who are taking on America's oral health challenges so that everyone has a chance to thrive. OPEN members use their unique experiences, knowledge, and skills to lead network activities every year, creating collective energy that is driving large-scale change.

OPEN Commitment to Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion



We are committed to building an environment that values everyone equally while addressing inequalities, including historical and contemporary injustices. We view optimal oral health and access to effective and affordable oral health care as a right rather than a privilege.



We are committed to **Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI)** that includes a commitment to systemic change and the assurance of the structural and personal conditions needed to support equity and inclusion for all people.



We believe that **a commitment to JEDI must be action-oriented**. It includes applying a health equity and social justice lens to our oral health work and our personal thinking and practice. It requires building an ongoing practice of critical reflection within our organization and the broader systems perpetuating inequities.



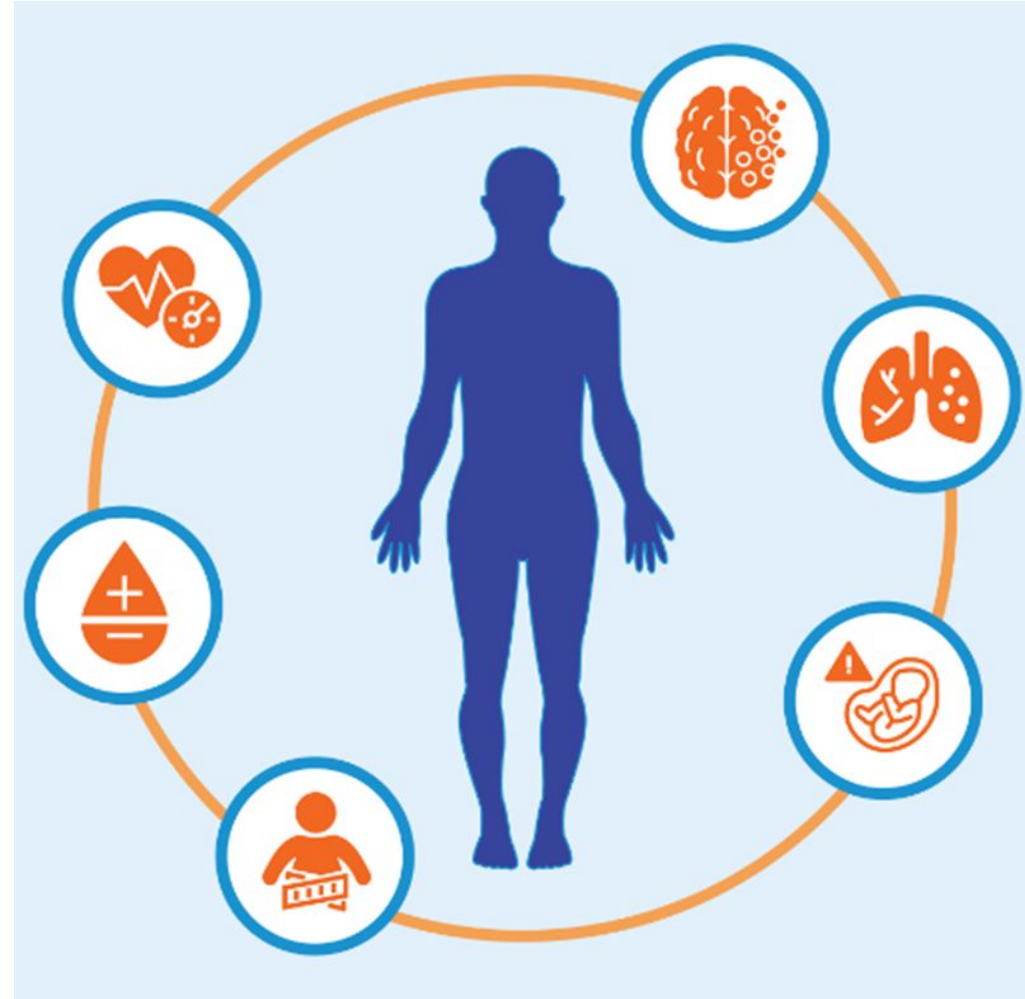
No one of us as individuals and no one institution will be perfect. Still, at OPEN, we are committed to the practice of JEDI and helping each other be accountable to practices that foster an inclusive environment. Otherwise, we are in danger of reinforcing health inequities, often unintentionally.



We believe that JEDI is a process that requires continual reflection and commitment that is best understood through aligned action at the micro and macro levels.

OPEN's Unique Role

- Amplify community voices
- Build capacity for grassroots advocacy
- Network centered on JEDI principles
- Community of change agents
- Diverse membership of oral health system stakeholders



OPEN Grassroots Definition

Grassroots work is rooted in the lived experiences of individuals prioritizing collective needs & amplifying power to influence the policies and programs in their lives.

By centralizing the power of people, grassroots efforts transform communities into agents of change.





Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

— Margaret Mead —

AZ QUOTES



OPEN Engagement in 2025



Collective Impact Strategy

OPEN's 5 Principles to Improve Oral Health

- ▶ **Advocate**
We advocate to advance oral health policies.
- ▶ **Listen & Learn**
We listen and learn from each other.
- ▶ **Bring People Together**
We bring together community members, advocates, and leaders.
- ▶ **Share**
We share best practices, resources, and lessons.
- ▶ **Look to Data**
We take a data-informed approach in all that we do.

Ongoing OPEN Opportunities

- Advocacy Committee
- Dental Coverage Committee
- Community Water Fluoridation (CWF) Learning Collaborative

Find out more at carequest.org/OPEN

OPEN "Takes"



Take 30

Community Water Fluoridation: Facts and Myths

Thursday, April 17, 2025
3:00 - 3:30 p.m. ET



Scott L. Thomas, DMD, DrPH
Professor and Associate Dean for Prevention and Public Health Sciences, University of Illinois Chicago, College of Dentistry



Elizabeth G. Lennie, DDS, MSHA
Senior Scientist for Population Health Programs, Council on Advocacy for Access and Prevention, American Dental Association

June 25 – Take 30: Medicaid Cuts and the Impact on Oral Health

July 8 – Take 30: Framed Messaging 101

OPEN Onboarding Checklist



Complete the **Membership Form**

You will be added to the OPEN listserv to receive timely announcements & newsletters

Familiarize yourself with the website and calendar & register for network opportunities of interest



Register for **OPEN Communities**

You will gain access to all member resources

Join the OPEN-wide Community to get updates from fellow members & set your Subscription Preferences



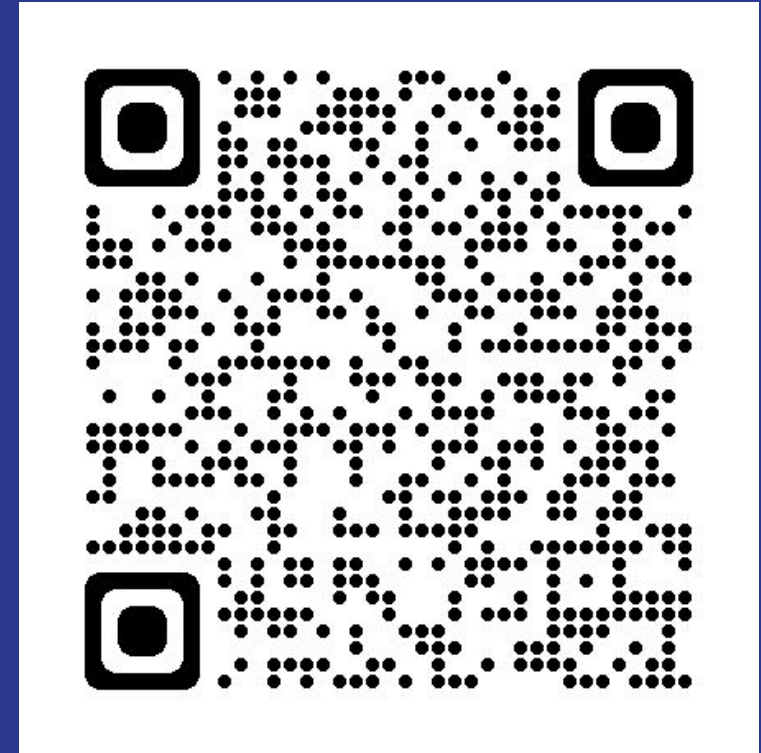
Join the next **OPEN House**

You can learn about all things OPEN & start building connections with members

Upcoming Dates: on September 18th & December 4th at 3pm Eastern

OPEN Membership Form


- **Network** with change agents committed to social justice & health equity
- **Connect** on oral health issues — start discussions, learn from one another, and find answers
- **Leverage** and share your expertise, knowledge, and resources



Scan to stay connected with
**OPEN + Become part of the
future Member Directory**

Website: carequest.org/open

CareQuest
Institute for Oral Health.

Translate this page Who We Are Latest News Careers  Log in/Register

Stories of Impact How We Work Topics Resources & Tools Education & CEs

Oral Health Progress and Equity Network

OPEN, an initiative of CareQuest Institute for Oral Health, is a diverse network of individuals and entities who are taking on America's oral health challenges so that everyone has a chance to thrive. OPEN members use their unique experiences, knowledge, and skills to lead network activities every year, creating collective energy that is driving large-scale change.

Join OPEN

OPEN

Oral Health Progress and Equity Network

Upcoming Events

Event	Date	Time (ET)	Location	Registration Link
Take 60: OPEN 2025 Kick-off	Feb 12	3-4 p.m.	Online	Register
Advocacy Committee Meeting	Feb 20	2-3 p.m.	Online	Register
Dental Coverage Committee Meeting	Feb 28	1-2 p.m.	Online	Register
Take 20: Championing Minimally Invasive Care — Aligning Advocacy to Transform Oral Health	Mar 6	3-3:20 p.m.	Online	Register
Advocacy Committee Meeting	Mar 26	3-4 p.m.	Online	Register
Dental Coverage Committee Meeting	Apr 2	2-3 p.m.	Online	Register
Advocacy Committee Meeting	Apr 16	3-4 p.m.	Online	Register
Hill Day	May 13-14		Washington, DC	Register

OPEN Communities

We know that oral health is vital to overall health, yet there are barriers in place, which, like locked doors, prevent people from optimal health. We catalyze a network to take on America's oral health challenges so that everyone has an equitable chance to thrive. We won't stop until everyone has the keys they need to fully access good oral health.

[Take me to Communities!](#)

Welcome to OPEN Communities!

Communities are a virtual space to connect with other OPEN members and work together to create equitable systems by sharing content, engaging in discussions, attending OPEN events, and taking part in collective action. Check out the Navigation Bar at the top of the page and click:

- **Communities** to connect with all OPEN members and teams in 'Communities' of interest to you ***be sure to set your Community subscription preferences to stay up to date in your inbox***
- **Directory** to search for other members by name, state, sector of work, and more
- **Events** to view all upcoming OPEN meetings, webinars, and Take 20s

communities.openoralhealth.org

Network Support Team



Bianca Rogers (she/her)

Project Manager

E: brogers@carequest.org

*If my hobby had a job title:
Film & Television Critic*



Frances Walsh (she/her)

Project Manager

E: fwalsh@carequest.org

*If my hobby had a job title:
Wilderness Adventure Guide*

Organizational Leads



Grandy Cody (she/her)

Vice President, Strategy

E: gcody@carequest.org



Trenae Simpson (she/her)

Sr. Director, Philanthropy

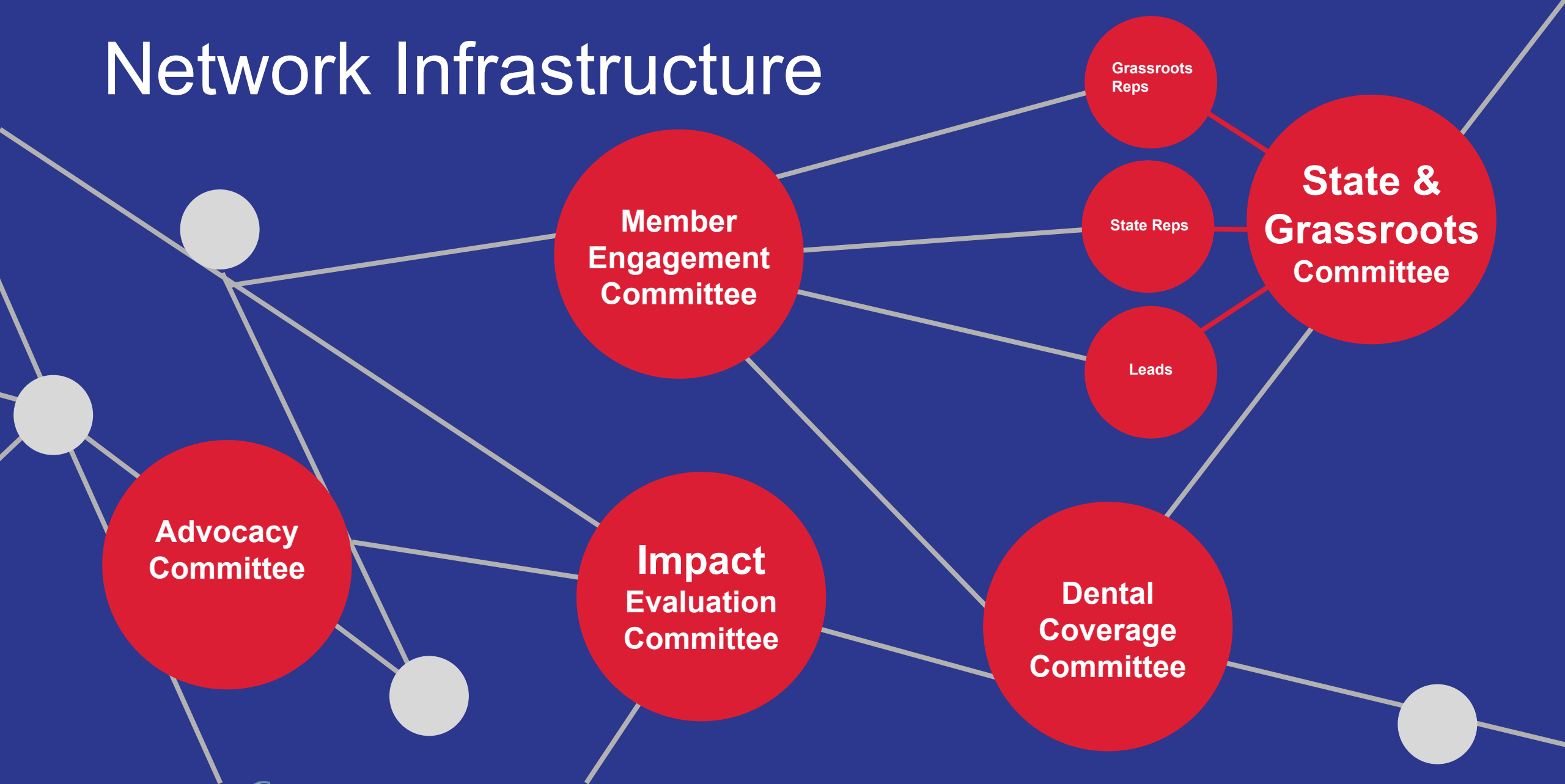
E: tsimpson@carequest.org

Update on the Political Landscape

- CDC Division of Oral Health eliminated
- Chief Dental Officer at HRSA eliminated
- Medicaid bill moves through House mark up
- Executive Order on voting and Elections
FDA taking action to remove fluoride supplements from the market
- Water fluoridation ban passed in two states: Utah and Florida



Network Infrastructure





Member Engagement Committee

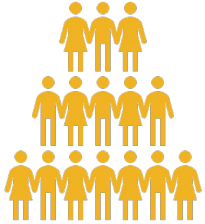


Coming Soon! OPEN Mentor Program

Mentors to connect with new members to provide personalized support to foster connection, belonging, and meaningful engagement across OPEN.

- **Initial Connection** within the first 30 days (Zoom, call, or email)
- **Suggested Conversation Topics:**
 - Introductions and interests
 - How to engage with OPEN
 - Time commitment preferences
 - Ongoing contact preferences

OPEN Mentor Program



Mentors

Who they are: Seasoned OPEN members, not necessarily formal leaders, who understand the network well and are willing to support new members.

Mentors will receive a brief training on OPEN resources and connections available

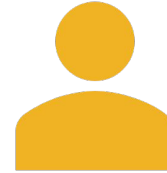


New Members (Mentees)

Automatically receive a welcome email upon joining OPEN

Given the option to opt-in to the Mentor Program via interest form

Choose a mentor based on shared interests or allow for automated match



Interest Form Sign up

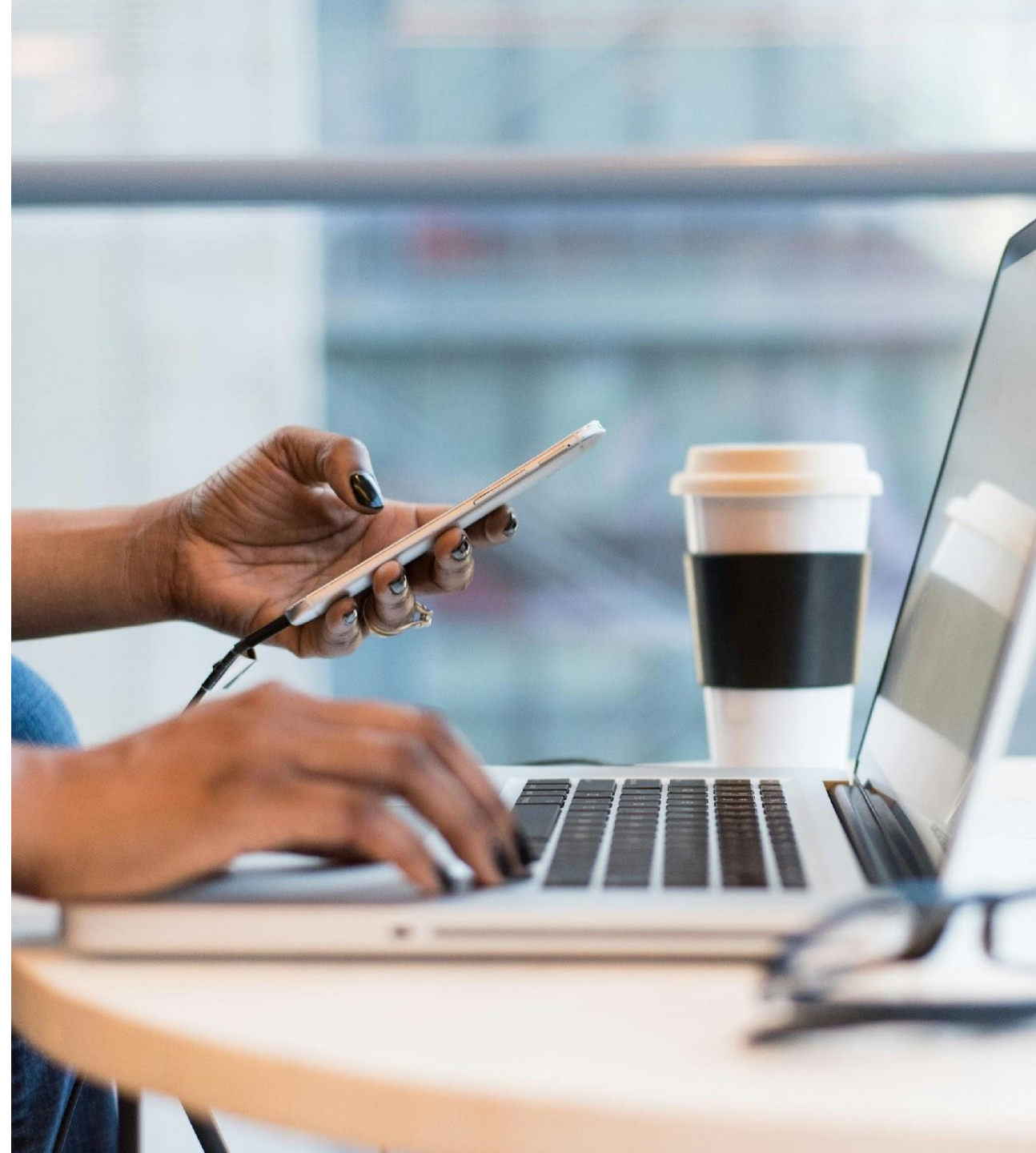
Name and pronouns

Field of work/expertise

Preferred method of contact

Regions & affinity groups they align with

**Poll: Would you
be interested in
participating in
the Mentor
Program?**





State & Grassroots Committee



Committee Process in 2025



State & Grassroots Committee Meetings will focus on key topics of interest identified by OPEN through 2024 Annual Meeting feedback.



Committee Leads will workshop each topic as a small group and co-design ideas to support this collective work with help from subject matter experts.



During each Committee meeting, Reps will join breakouts to explore that day's topic from the lens of where they're working or where they'd like to grow.



Reps will report back on key strategies or resonating messages so that by the end of the year, we will have a repository of targeted feedback and recommendations



This repeat format will allow us to co-create a resource that reflects real experiences, strategies, and challenges from across the OPEN Network.

OPEN Grassroots Engagement Playbook

A "Playbook" of recommended tools, training, resources, and support for effective community outreach, engagement, and advocacy initiatives including:

- **Community Engagement Toolkit**
 - How-to guidance for building connections with local trust points and community groups
- **Customizable Templates**
 - Targeted oral health education and issue-specific talking points to engage various communities
- **Training & Technical Assistance**
 - Communication and listening, cultural humility, and organizing community events and programs

Determine which "Play" is right for your work, and build from your team's strengths.

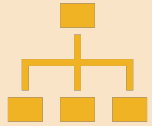




Impact Evaluation Committee



Impact Evaluation Committee Purpose



Oversee the initial implementation of OPEN's evaluation and impact measurement framework.



Support data-driven strategies, enhance transparency and accountability, and elevate the reach and impact of OPEN.

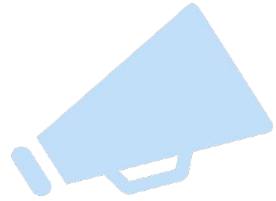


Identify opportunities to share and utilize insights to inform the planning and progress of all network activities and components.



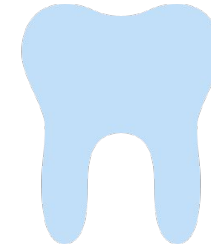
Assess areas for refinement to ensure the framework evolves to meet the changing needs of the network.

OPEN Impact Measurement Framework



OPEN's Role

Engage & empower community voices
Develop & amplify aligned messaging
Co-create & share solutions, tools, and resources
Leverage member expertise & lead with data



Success Measures

Increase & improvements in OPEN membership engagement
Growth of community led efforts & advocacy
More states with robust oral health coalitions & action plans
Policy advancements that advance whole health approaches
Healthier & equitable communities



Advocacy Committee



OPEN Hill Day

121*

Member Visits

95

Attendees

33

States Represented



What Can Congress Do?



Action 1

Oppose Medicaid cuts that would jeopardize access to dental care for 72 million people who rely on the program.

- Medicaid is a vital source of dental coverage for children, people with disabilities, and low-income adults and seniors — improving health outcomes, reducing medical debt, and boosting economic opportunity and job performance.
- Cuts to Medicaid funding would force states to eliminate adult dental benefits, leading to increased emergency room use, reduced services or closures of safety net dental providers, and higher system-wide health care costs.



Action 2

Improve access to dental care for veterans who get medical care through the VA.

- The majority of veterans do not qualify for VA dental benefits, and those who do often face provider shortages, geographic barriers, and high out-of-pocket costs — placing them at greater risk for chronic conditions and financial strain.
- Nearly 8 million veterans report fair or poor oral health, with rural and disabled veterans disproportionately affected due to limited provider access and higher care costs.¹



Action 3

Support the HEADs UP Act, which would designate people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) as a Medically Underserved Population (MUP) and increase their access to oral health care.

- Individuals with I/DD face worse oral health outcomes — reporting less frequent dental visits and higher rates of discrimination and emergency dental care use than those without disabilities.²
- Designating the I/DD population as a Medically Underserved Population would expand access to tailored services through health centers, enhance provider training and support, and unlock targeted federal funding to address long-standing access gaps — including in oral health care.



Dental Coverage Committee





Interested in Getting
Involved in OPEN Now?

Join the Annual Meeting Design Team!

Work with members and staff to shape
the next major OPEN event



Q+A



Breakout Instructions

OPEN space for conversations to support members to be more effective within their own communities and work.

Consider:

- What do you need to succeed in your work?
- What would you like to learn or share with others?



Breakout by Interest Area

Vote with your feet!

1. Amplifying Community Voices through Storytelling
2. Stakeholder Communication & Building Connections
3. Building Data Literacy & Using Existing Datasets
4. Policy Communication & Bipartisan Messaging
5. Sustainability for Coalitions & Collaborative Advocacy



Report Back

Conversation Highlights &
Key Takeaways





Breakout by Region

Neighboring States
Meet & Greet



Regional Breakout	States Included
Midwest	Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin
Northeast/ Mid-Atlantic	Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia
South/Southeast	Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas
West	Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming

OPEN House Wrap Up

Evaluation Form

- Deadline: June 13

Resources post meeting

- Webinar recording + slides

Complete Onboarding Checklist

- Membership Form on website – carequest.org/open
- OPEN Communities account setup – communities.openoralhealth.org

Next OPEN House

- Sept. 18th @ 3pm ET
- December 4th @ 3pm ET



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