



OPEN House

Quarterly Network Orientation

September 18, 2025



Agenda

1

New Member Welcome

Newcomer
Introductions

3

Committee Updates

Purpose and
progress from each
OPEN Committee

5

Reflect & Close

Full group debrief and
next steps

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?



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



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's Grassroot 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: carequest.org/OPEN



OPEN “Takes”


CareQuest
Institute for Oral Health®

OPEN


Take 30

Community Water Fluoridation: Facts and Myths

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



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



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

Save the Date!

Sept.
25th

CWF Learning Collaborative

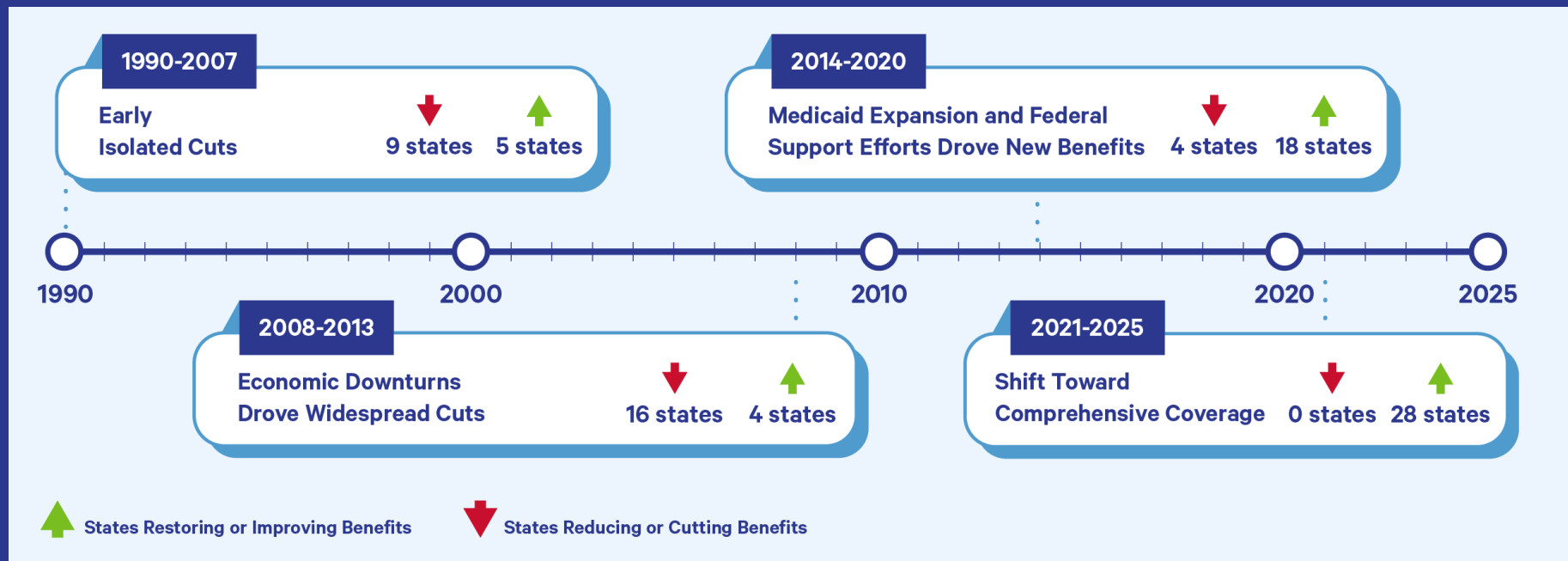
Sept.
30th

Take 60: Medicaid Adult Dental Benefits Are Not Optional: Oral Health is Health!

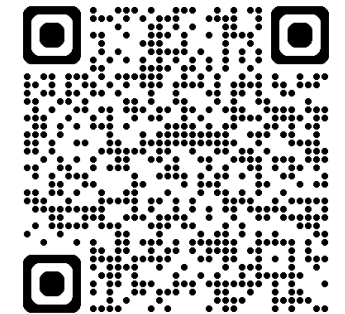
Take 60: Medicaid Adult Dental Benefits Are Not Optional – Oral Health is Health!

September 30 | 3 p.m. ET

Join us for this 60-minute session about how Medicaid adult dental benefits have evolved over time and the emerging threats to coverage.



Register now



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



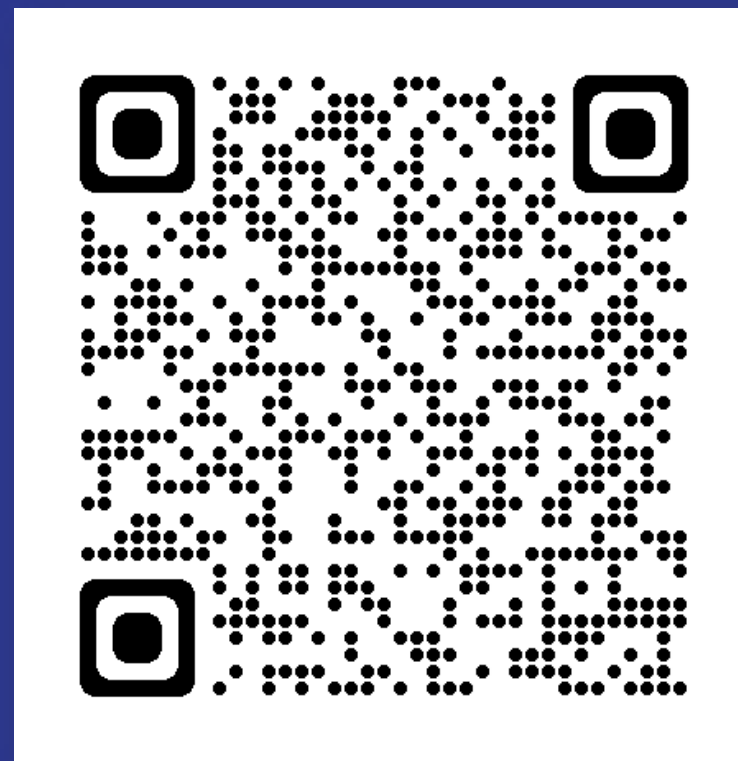
Join the next **OPEN House**

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

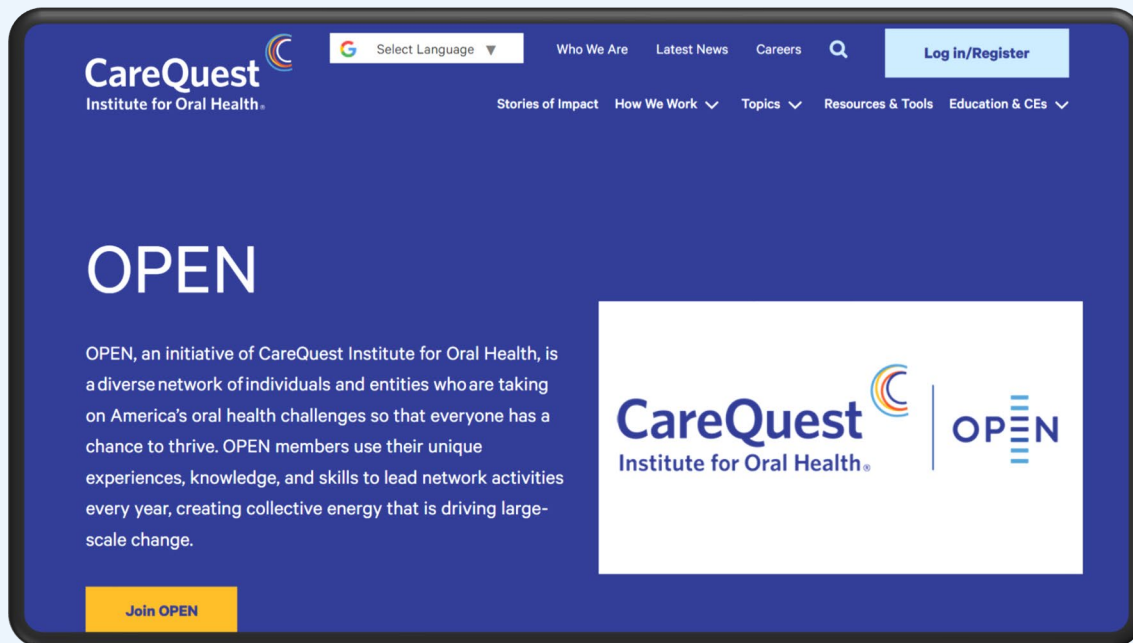
Upcoming: December 4th at 3pm Eastern

OPEN Membership Form

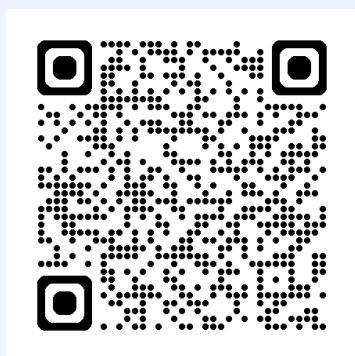
- ❑ **Network** with change agents committed to social justice & health equity
- ❑ **Connect** on oral health issues — start discussions, learn from one another, and find answers
- ❑ **Leverage** and share your expertise, knowledge, and resources



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



Website: carequest.org/open



Scan here
to visit!

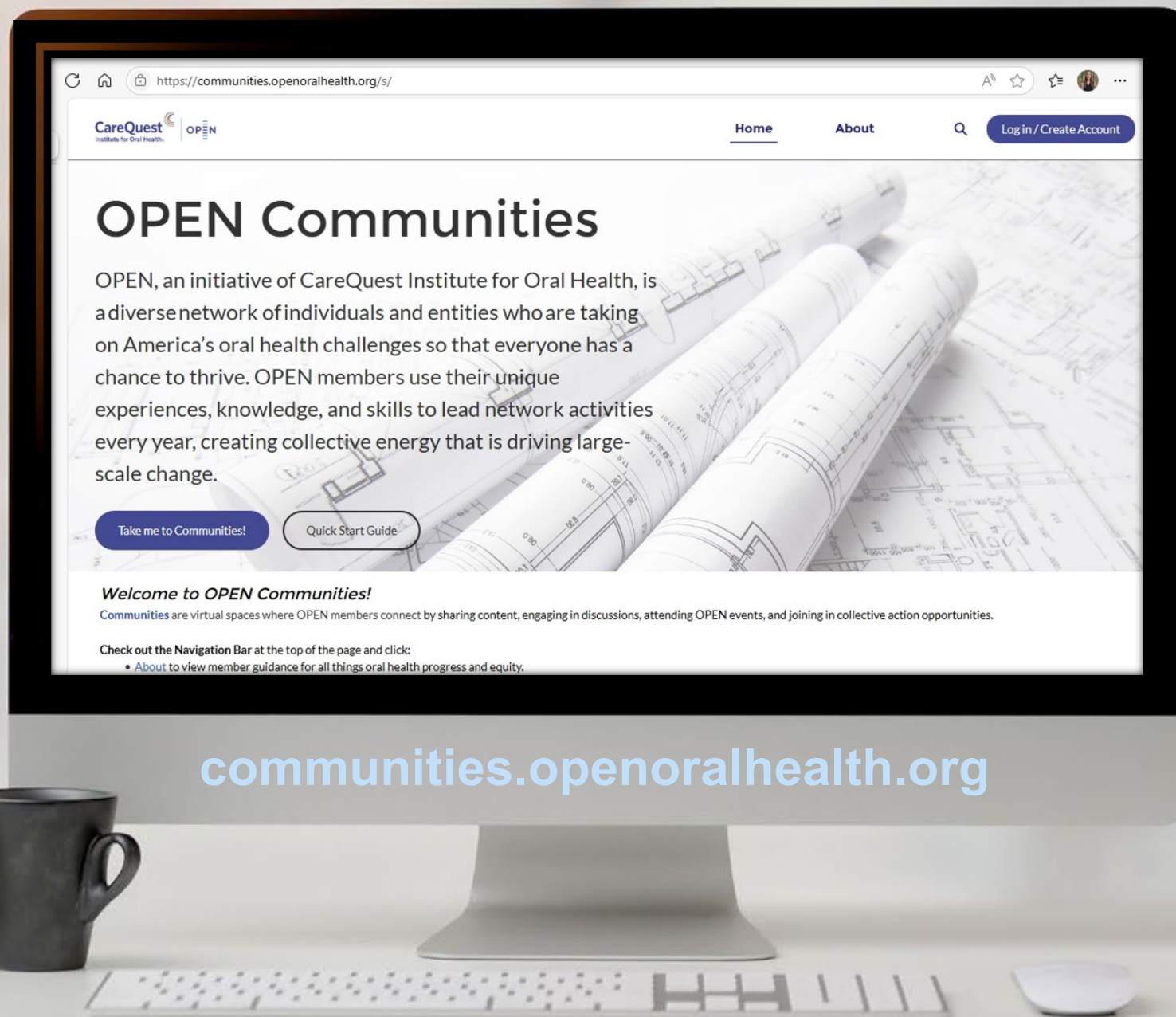


Stay connected!

Catch up on past event recordings and register for the exciting ones ahead!

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



https://communities.openoralhealth.org/s/



[Home](#)

[About](#)



[Log in / Create Account](#)

OPEN Communities

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.

[Take me to Communities!](#)

[Quick Start Guide](#)

Welcome to OPEN Communities!

Communities are virtual spaces where OPEN members connect by sharing content, engaging in discussions, attending OPEN events, and joining in collective action opportunities.

Check out the Navigation Bar at the top of the page and click:

- [About](#) to view member guidance for all things oral health progress and equity.

communities.openoralhealth.org

Network Support Team



Frances Walsh (she/her)
Project Manager, OPEN
E: fwalsh@carequest.org



COMING SOON!
Manager, Strategic Initiatives – OPEN
CareQuest Institute for Oral Health

Organizational Leads



Grandy Cody (she/her)
Vice President, Strategy
E: gcody@carequest.org



Trenae Simpson (she/her)
Sr. Director, Philanthropy
E: tsimpson@carequest.org

**Introducing
CareQuest Institute's
New CEO!**

**Welcome
Wade
Rakes!**



Political Landscape Updates

H.R. 1, The One Big Beautiful Bill Act, passed on July 4, including deep cuts to Medicaid that will have lasting impacts on oral health care access

Agency Cuts:

- Elimination of the CDC's Division of Oral Health
- Elimination of HRSA's Chief Dental Officer
- Reductions in NIH oral health research

Fluoride:

- Water fluoridation ban passed in two states: Utah and Florida
- FDA action on fluoride supplements for children



Join us for the Annual Meeting!



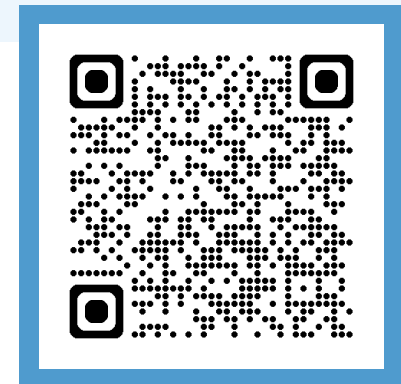
ANNUAL MEETING

October 15-16 | Virtual Event

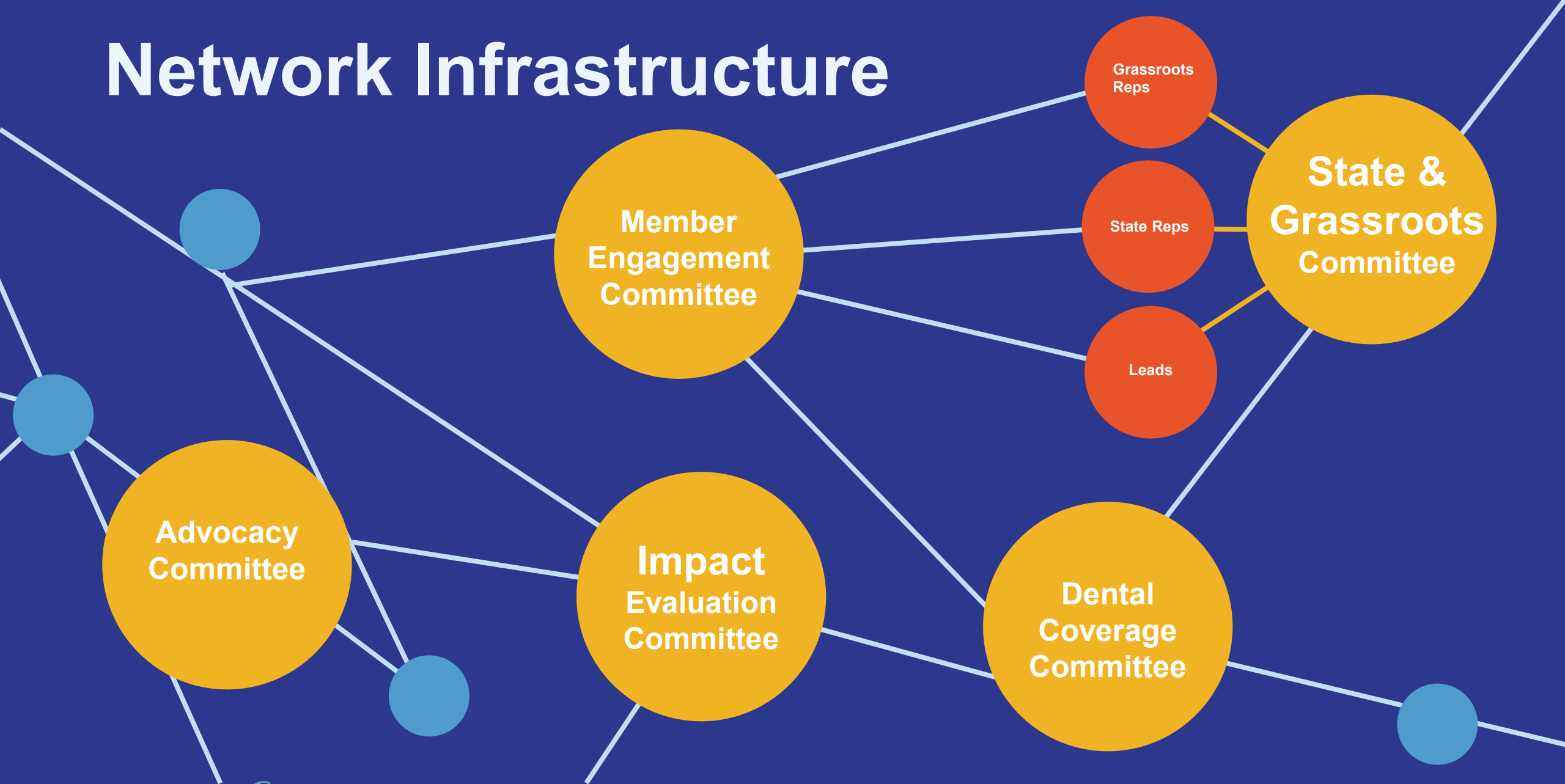
People, Power, and Partnership: Advancing Community Oral Health



Learn more and register



Network Infrastructure

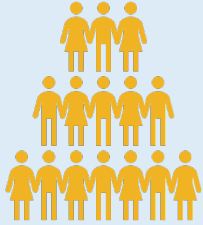




Member Engagement Committee



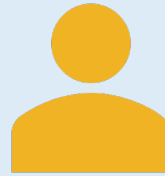
OPEN Mentor Program



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



Mentor Interest Form

Name and pronouns

Field of work/expertise

Preferred method of contact

Regions & affinity groups they align with



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

NOW OPEN: Mentor Interest Form

Why now? To formalize and expand OPEN's culture of peer support.

Who are we seeking? Formal Leaders and former Formal Leaders.

What's the commitment? Up to 4 hours with each mentee over 4 months, for up to 3 mentees/year.

What's provided? Mentor Resource Kit, FAQs, support contacts.

Where will mentors be featured? In the new Mentor Directory launching in 2026.

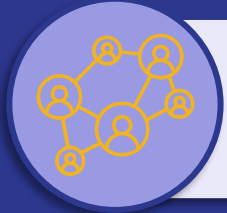
Action ask: Complete the Mentor Interest Form to join the pilot phase!



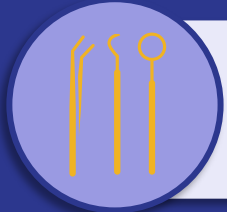
Dental Coverage Committee



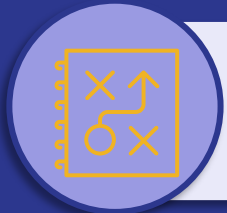
About the Dental Coverage Committee



Connect people and organizations with a shared goal.



Platform for advocates to share experiences and lessons learned from efforts to protect adult Medicaid oral health benefits in their states and strengthen Medicare.



Accelerate the spread of new strategies and solutions to build upon national progress to enhance Medicaid adult dental benefits and Medicare dental coverage.



Offer national perspectives and updates on Congressional and administrative actions.

Meeting structure and topics

During the first half of the year, meetings typically focus on ‘rapid response’ as members actively engage in their legislative sessions. In addition to sharing real-time information about their efforts, members present and discuss topics aimed at supporting their advocacy efforts:



- ✓ *Expanding/protecting Medicaid adult dental benefits*
- ✓ *Understanding threats to benefits and programs and developing advocacy and mobilization strategies in response*
- ✓ *Making the link between oral health and the opioid crisis*
- ✓ *The role of and ways to leverage grassroots voice in advocacy efforts*
- ✓ *Expanding the list of treatments approved under medically necessary dental coverage in Medicare*
- ✓ *Building oral health champions*

Meeting structure and topics (cont'd)

During the second half of the year meetings transition to more formal calls where policy topics and advocacy strategies are presented and discussed in greater depth for use in future policy campaigns. Meeting topics have focused on:



- ✓ *Emerging research and on-the-ground experience on effective oral health messaging and strategies to reach multiple audiences*
- ✓ *The impact that insufficient Medicaid adult dental coverage has on oral health care access, utilization, and health outcomes*
- ✓ *The role managed care organizations can play in covering dental services*
- ✓ *Educating providers and consumers on dental treatments covered as medically necessary*
- ✓ *Readying for upcoming elections and new administrations*

Resources and Upcoming Events

- **Federal Budget Reconciliation Law Implementation Timeline For Key Medicaid, Medicare, and Marketplace Provisions** ([Families USA Fact Sheet](#))
- **Federal Medicaid Cuts Threaten State Dental Benefits: Lessons from 6 States** ([Community Catalyst, CareQuest, Families USA Issue Brief](#))
- **What Happens if the Adult Medicaid Dental Benefit Goes Away?** ([ADA HPI Issue Brief](#))
- **A Cut to Medicaid is a Cut to Medicare** ([Justice in Aging Issue Brief](#))
- **OPEN Take 60: Medicaid adult dental benefits are not optional – oral health is health!**
[Register here](#)

Join us for a 60-minute session focused on the critical role of Medicaid adult dental benefits (MADB) in advancing health equity and access to care. This OPEN Take 60 will explore the national landscape of nMADB, featuring a hands-on tutorial on the Coverage Checker tool and a look at how benefits have evolved over time. You'll learn about the implications of HR1 and other emerging threats to coverage, and hear from a dynamic panel of experts as they share proven strategies for expanding and protecting these vital benefits.



Advocacy Committee



OPEN's Common Policy Agenda



Policy Values: *Equity, Access, Integration, Prevention*



Join the Advocacy Committee!

Next Meeting:
October 2
Help shape
strategic
priorities for
2025

OPEN Priorities:

- Dental benefits in Medicaid & Medicare
- Oral healthcare for veterans & people with disabilities
- Federal funding for state oral health infrastructure
- Integration of oral health into primary care
- Prevention-focused public health systems
- Equity-centered policy & funding decisions





Community Water Fluoridation (CWF) Learning Collaborative



Fluoridation Resources Shared

- [Community Water Fluoridation Toolkit](#)
 - [CWF Kick-Off Slides](#)
- ADA HPI Research Brief: [State-Level Costs of Removing Fluoride from Community Water Systems](#)
- NCSL Snapshot: [State of the Tap: Policy Actions on Fluoride in Drinking Water](#)
- Organized Dentistry Coalition letter: [Urging Department of Defense \(DoD\) to maintain current water fluoridation levels](#)
- AAP Resources: I Like My Teeth
 - Blog post: [Where does fluoride come from?](#)
 - Blog Post: [Pediatricians Continue to Recommend Fluoridation](#)
 - Resource: [Page for water operators](#)
- USPSTF [recommends fluoride supplements](#) (Grade B)



Community Water Fluoridation Toolkit

Toolkits & Communication Resources

[NACCHO Communications Toolkit](#)

- Provides fact sheets, myth-busting materials, and social media templates tailored for local health departments.

[Missouri Coalition Toolkit](#)

- Offers cost-benefit analyses, educational materials, and case studies demonstrating fluoridation's effectiveness.

[California Fluoridation Manual](#)

- A practical guide for water system operators and public health officials, emphasizing collaboration with community partners.

[Fluoride for Smiles Advocate Toolkit](#)

- Provides resources for community members to advocate for fluoridated water, including templates for outreach to policymakers.

[Campaign for Dental Health Toolkit](#)

- Includes sample testimony, social media graphics, letters to the editor, and public engagement templates.

[Virginia Health Catalyst Fluoridation Toolbox](#)

- Provides resources for health professionals to educate patients and communities about water fluoridation.

Scientific Research & Public Health Evidence

[CDC Fluoridation Overview](#)

- Details the safety, effectiveness, and cost-efficiency of fluoridation, highlighting its role in reducing tooth decay.

[Fluoridation Trends](#)

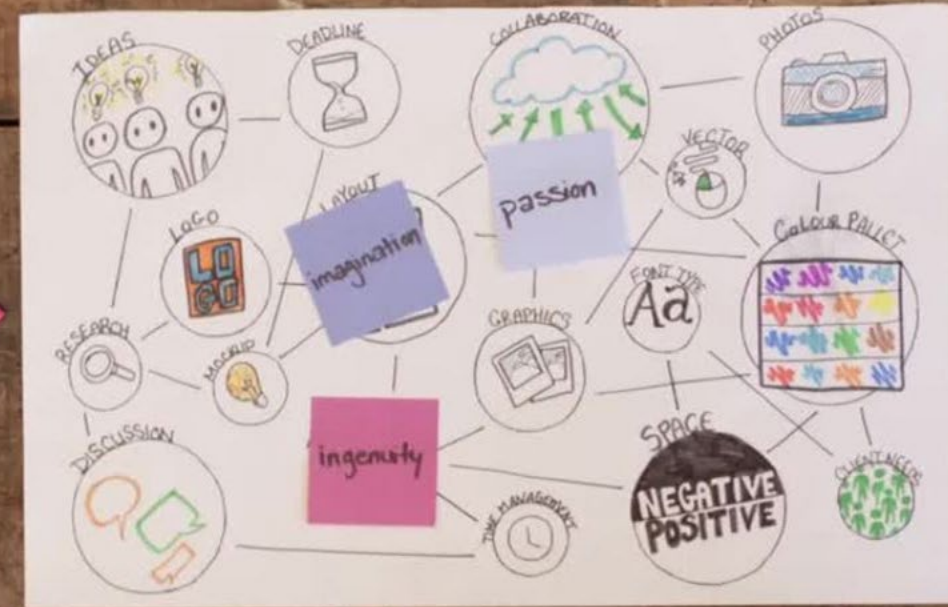


State & Grassroots Committee



OPEN Grassroots Engagement Playbook

- Co-created **State & Grassroots Engagement Playbook** to reflect phases of development across communities, states, and sectors
- **Goal:** make the Playbook a **living guide**, enriched with member feedback and real-world tools
- Launching **Request for Resources Form** to build a **living library** of tools and training materials
- **Action Step:** Share tools & ideas through the Playbook Request for Resources Form



Playbook Phases of Development



Research & Partnership Building: Learning about your local landscape and building the right relationships



Training, Education & Advocacy Development: Equipping communities to lead, organize, and advocate for change



Planning & Goal Setting: Aligning around shared goals, grounded in community input



Tailored Implementation, Outreach & Events: Delivering initiatives that meet people where they are and reflect local priorities



Evaluation & Sustainability: Reflecting, assessing, and adapting for long-term impact

Request for Resources: State & Grassroots Engagement

- **Community & Landscape Assessment Tools** (e.g., community profiles, needs assessments, data dashboards)
- **Stakeholder & Partnership Resources** (e.g., partnership templates, outreach guides, MOUs)
- **Equity & Cultural Humility Frameworks** (e.g., resources that help center justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in oral health work)
- **Leadership & Capacity Building Resources** (e.g., leadership development, training modules)
- **Community Voice & Power Building** (e.g., advisory councils, listening sessions, storytelling guides).
- **Advocacy & Policy Engagement** (e.g., advocacy toolkits, testimony templates, power mapping)

- **Planning & Strategy Tools** (e.g., goal-setting templates, action plans, advocacy roadmaps)
- **Facilitation & Engagement Guides** (e.g., meeting design guides, facilitation methods, event planning checklists)
- **Communications & Outreach Materials** (e.g., messaging templates, flyers, press releases,, social media kits)
- **Evaluation & Data Tools** (e.g., survey templates, feedback forms, outcome measurement tools)
- **Sustainability & Funding Resources** (e.g., sponsorship templates, grant guides, sustainability checklists)
- **Replication & Scaling Tools** (e.g., toolkits for adapting or spreading successful models)



Impact Evaluation Committee



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

Now OPEN: Network Health Assessment

What's New: NHA now tied to OPEN's theory of change & logic model.

Streamlined: Fewer, sharper questions — both quantitative + qualitative.

Stories of Impact: Members can share examples, reflections, and solutions.

Optional Interviews: 20-min slots Sept 25–Oct 3 for deeper stories.

Due Date: Survey closes October 2. Results shared at Annual Meeting Oct 16.

Bonus Incentive: \$10 Gift Card

Purpose: From check-in → reflection of true network impact.

Your feedback is important to us!

Please take the
Network Health Assessment
and let us know how we can improve
the network.

Responses due:
October 2



Q+A



Breakout by Interest Area

Vote with your feet!



- 1) **Research & Partnership Building:** Learning about your local landscape and building the right relationships.
- 2) **Training, Education & Advocacy Development:** Equipping communities to lead, organize, and advocate for change.
- 3) **Planning & Goal Setting:** Aligning around shared goals, grounded in community input.
- 4) **Implementation, Outreach & Events:** Delivering initiatives that meet people where they are and reflect local priorities.
- 5) **Evaluation & Sustainability:** Reflecting, assessing, and adapting for long-term impact.

Breakout Instructions

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

Consider:

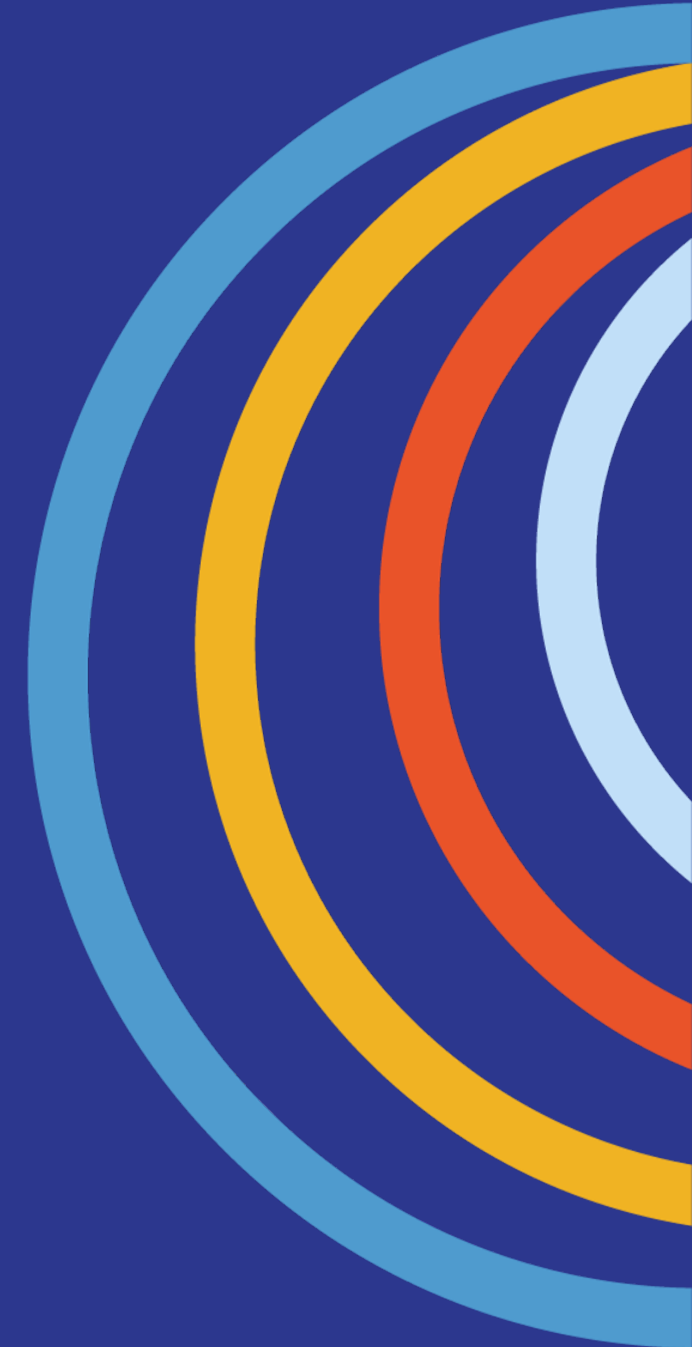
- What this phase looks like in real life
- Which insights and actions resonate
- What would make this phase stronger and more useful to the field





Report Back

Conversation Highlights & Key
Takeaways



OPEN House Wrap Up

Evaluation Form

Deadline: October 2

Next Steps

Network Health Assessment (NHA) due October 2
OPEN Playbook Request for Resources due October 31
OPEN Mentor Interest Form due October 31

**Complete
Onboarding Checklist**

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

Next OPEN House

December 4th @ 3pm ET



OPEN