



## ASSIGNMENT OF BENEFITS LAWS: INCREASING CHOICE, REMOVING BURDENS FOR WISCONSIN'S DENTAL PATIENTS

In Wisconsin and other states where these laws don't exist, insurers create confusion and additional hurdles for patients.

### Problems for patients

When a patient seeing a dentist of their choice wants insurance payments for covered services to go directly to the dentist (known as "assignment of benefits"), Wisconsin law allows insurance companies to ignore the patient's wishes and refuse to directly issue payment to the provider. Not allowing assignment of benefits has two negative effects on the patient:

- The patient may have to pay out of pocket at the time of dental service and await reimbursement from their insurer, creating financial hardship for some.
- The dentist will have to contact the patient for payment after services have been rendered, which is often confusing to patients who expect their insurers to pay providers directly.

### Solution

Assignment of Benefits (AoB) laws allow patients to choose to have payment sent directly to their provider. Insurance companies would pay providers no more than they would if they paid the patient directly – and often would save money if they aren't required to issue a paper check.



### Why Assignment of Benefits laws make sense for Wisconsin

- Puts patients in control of their benefits while ensuring that the insurance benefit is used for its intended purpose.
- Alleviates financial and administrative burdens from patients by allowing payment to be sent directly to the dental office, instead of having the patient pay upfront for services and then await reimbursement from the insurance company.
- Allows, but does not require, patients the option to assign their dental benefit directly to the dentist.
- Reduces cost of care associated with collecting debts and managing losses from non-payments for dentists billing patients.
- Insurance companies pay no more than they would if they pay the patient directly.

## National, Bipartisan Momentum for Assignment of Benefits Legislation

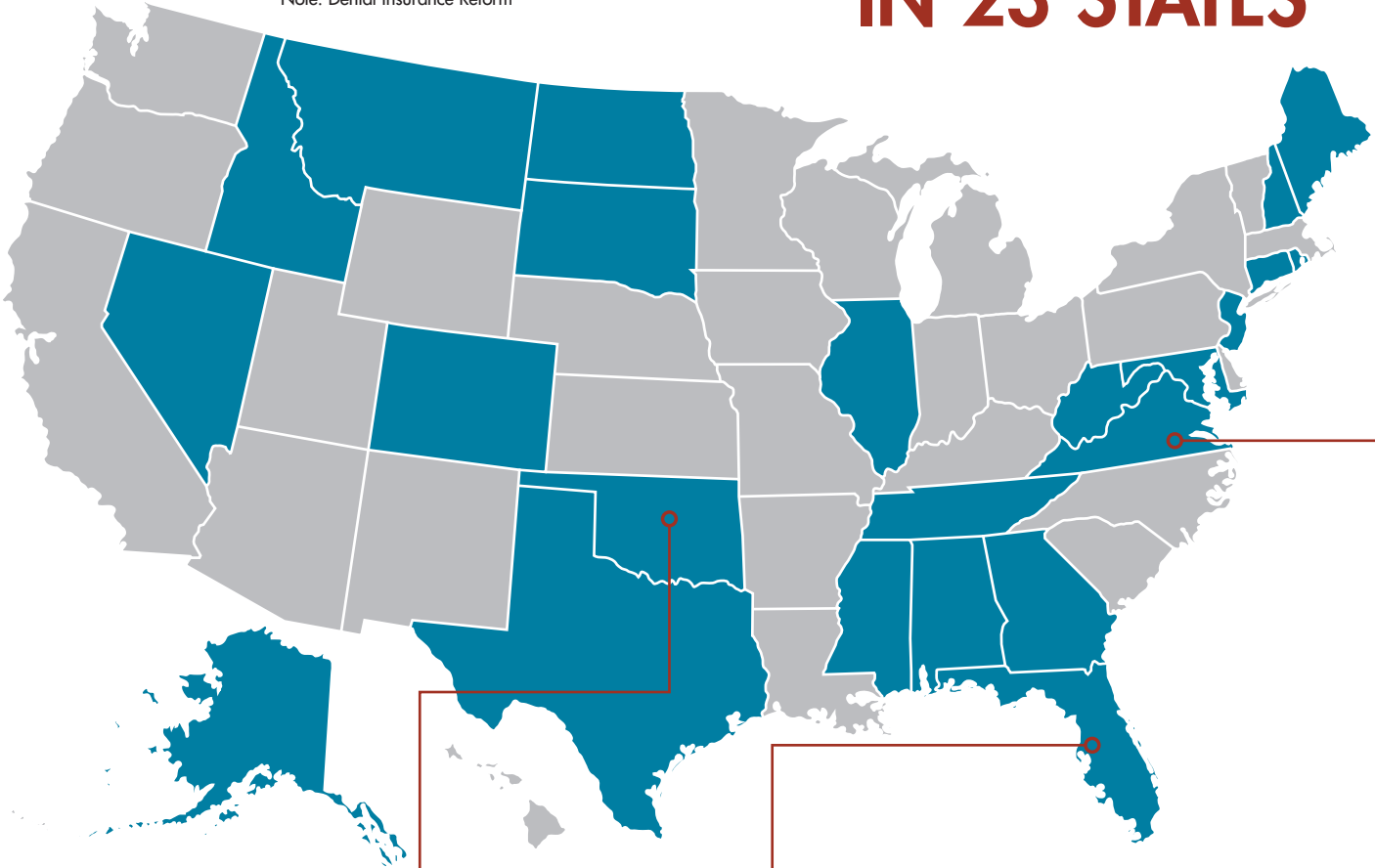
*"Already passed in several states, "assignment of benefits" laws would empower patients to choose whether they want insurance companies to directly pay dental clinics, freeing patients from having to pay upfront and negotiate with insurance companies for reimbursement."*

**- Consumer Choice Center, Policy**

Note: Dental Insurance Reform



# IN 23 STATES



**Oklahoma's** Health Care Freedom of Choice Act requires that a practitioner be directly compensated by insurers for services and procedures, allowing patients to effectively assign their benefits.

**Florida's** 627.638 Direct payment for hospital, medical services requires that insurers directly make payments to providers. Furthermore, insurance contracts may not prohibit the direct payment of providers.

**Virginia's** § 38.2-3407.13. Refusal to accept assignments prohibited; dentists and oral surgeons states that no insurer or plan may refuse to make reimbursement payments directly to a dental provider under an assignment of benefits.

> To learn more about Assignment of Benefits legislation in Wisconsin, please contact WDA Director of Government Services Joe Mesec at 608-250-3442 or [jmesec@wda.org](mailto:jmesec@wda.org).