ORAL HEALTH IN AMERICA

Experiences of Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities

**PROFILE OF ORAL HEALTH IN AMERICA**

- Nearly one-third of older adults have untreated tooth decay
- Nearly one-third of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) have untreated cavities and have difficulty visiting the dentist
- Minority older adults are less likely to visit the dentist
- Cost is the main reason for not visiting the dentist more frequently
- Cognitive, physical, and behavioral limitations can make it difficult for persons with I/DD to brush and floss their teeth
- Less than half of older adults actually visited the dentist in the last year, although three-fourths said they planned to
- 74% of low income adults and 48% of high income adults accept that they will lose some teeth with age
- Missing natural teeth is another reason seniors do not visit the dentist

**WHO IS IMPACTED?**

- Health, United States, 2015: With Special Feature on Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities, National Center for Health Statistics, 2015
- The Changing Landscape of Aging and Disability Information and Referral/Assistance, National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities, 2015

**WHAT HAPPENS AS A RESULT?**

- Medicaid Adult Dental Benefits: An Overview, Center for Health Care Strategies, May 2017

**WHY DOES THIS HAPPEN?**

- Older Adults’ Oral Health in a State of Decay, Oral Health America, 2013
- Medicaid Adult Dental Benefits: An Overview, Center for Health Care Strategies, May 2017

**PROFILE OF ORAL HEALTH IN AMERICA**

- Oral Health: Overview, Administrators for Community Living, 2017
- Oral Health: Oral Health Problems, Administration for Community Living, 2017

**SOURCES:**

- Health, United States, 2015: With Special Feature on Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities, National Center for Health Statistics, 2015
- The Changing Landscape of Aging and Disability Information and Referral/Assistance, National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities, 2015
WHOM IS IMPACTED?
- Older Adults
- Low-Income Older Adults
- People with Disabilities
- Unmet Need

WHAT HAPPENS AS A RESULT?
- Gum Disease Occurs In...
  - 70% of older adults
  - 80% of adults with disabilities
- Periodontal Disease is Associated With...
  - Diabetes
  - Stroke
  - Cardiovascular Disease
  - Adverse Pregnancy Outcomes
- TOOTH LOSS
  - More than 1/3 of adults 65 years or older have lost all of their teeth
- Poor Nutrition Occurs When...
  - Older Adults have changes in chewing ability, untreated tooth decay, or missing teeth, making it more difficult to consume a healthy diet

WHY DOES THIS HAPPEN?
- No Dental Care Coverage in Medicare
  - 4 out of 5 uninsured seniors cannot pay for a major dental procedure
- Barriers to Dental Care For Persons with Disabilities...
- Limited Access to Providers
  - 33 MILLION PEOPLE live where dentists and clinics are scarce
- Poor Nutrition Occurs When...
  - Older Adults have changes in chewing ability, untreated tooth decay, or missing teeth, making it more difficult to consume a healthy diet

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?
- Increase Coverage
  - Adding a dental benefit under Medicare would increase affordability and access to dental benefits for older adults and persons with disabilities
- Increase Access
  - Integrate oral health into person-centered healthcare
  - Increase oral health workforce training
- Innovation
  - Teledentistry and other innovations offer opportunities to meet the needs of older adults and people with disabilities
- Awareness
  - Educate stakeholders about oral health needs

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