



ORAL HEALTHCARE CAN'T WAIT®

Improved Oral Health Can Save Billions for the United States

LACK OF ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE ORAL HEALTHCARE IS A BARRIER

It is essential that Americans have access to oral healthcare not just for the overall health of the nation, but also for the health of the economy. While there is evidence that the number of children getting dental care is increasing, the number of adults getting care is slow to improve. As of 2021, 15.1 million Americans on Medicaid were without comprehensive dental coverage. The only dental benefit in Medicare is through the Medicare Advantage plans.



As of 2019, **~10-13%** of children and **~26%** of working adults were without any dental insurance.



As of 2017, **~70%** of seniors were without any dental insurance.

TREATING PERIODONTAL CONDITIONS AND CHRONIC DISEASES CAN LEAD TO LARGE MEDICAL COST SAVINGS

A growing body of research has linked oral health, particularly periodontal disease, to several chronic diseases including diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and stroke. Periodontal treatment has been demonstrated to be an effective strategy for lowering overall medical costs.

Prevalence of systemic disease/periodontal disease	(%) of population
Diabetes	11.40%
Cardiovascular disease	4.60%
Stroke	3.10%
Periodontal disease	70% across adults and seniors
Periodontal disease	40% across pregnant women

Source: [About Chronic Diseases | CDC](#)

OTHER KEY MEDICAL SAVINGS ASSOCIATED WITH BETTER ORAL HEALTHCARE

As individuals receive regular dental care, their medical health improves. Here are some areas of cost savings:

\$217.6M



Pregnancy: Poor oral health is associated with low birth weight, preterm birth, preeclampsia and gestational diabetes.

\$1.4B



Ventilator Associated Pneumonia: Since the oral cavity retains respiratory pathogens, oral hygiene is a cost-effective therapy for patients.

\$1.6B



The majority of ER visits are made up of Medicaid beneficiaries. Expanding dental coverage to those with chronic conditions could save the country on average **\$1.6B/yr.**

\$7.4B



Diabetes: For people with diabetes, periodontal treatment could save up to \$7.4 billion annually in health care

\$22.8B



Total cost savings: The U.S. could save \$22.8 billion annually if oral health care is improved.

EMERGENCY ORAL CARE HAS NEGATIVE IMPACTS ON EDUCATION AND BUSINESS

Poor oral health is associated with unplanned lost hours at work or school, which may affect a person's productivity.



An estimated average of **126 million hours** of work and school are lost annually due to unplanned dental care.

WHAT WE NEED FROM OUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

As the nation's medical health improves, valuable healthcare dollars return to the government, businesses, and the American people. We ask policymakers to:

- **Expand dental coverage** to those with chronic conditions such as diabetes, stroke, and heart disease, specifically Medicaid and Medicare.
- **Include oral health education** and its link to overall medical health in government-funded healthcare consumer education efforts.
- **Expand and promote** the importance of dental insurance in all its forms.
- **Dental utilization** is critical to accrue healthcare cost savings.



Better oral health leads to better comprehensive health!