

# ORAL HEALTHCARE CAN'T WAIT®

The Connection between Oral Health and Overall Health



If every American had a dental appointment every year, the overall health of the nation would improve. That's because oral health is essential to overall health. A growing body of research shows that poor oral health, particularly periodontal disease, is linked to several chronic diseases including diabetes, stroke, heart disease, and pregnancy complications. Expanding dental coverage to those with periodontal conditions and chronic disease is demonstrated to be an effective strategy for lowering overall medical costs and improving the overall health of the nation.

## BETTER COVERAGE CAN LEAD TO BETTER ORAL HEALTHCARE

It is essential that people get oral healthcare on a regular basis. While there is evidence that the number of children getting dental care is increasing, the number of adults getting care is decreasing. Only about half of the dental care needed is being provided.



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.

Many oral diseases may be prevented with regular dental care and studies show that treating periodontal disease could result in significant savings in medical costs per person.

The anticipated average annual cost savings for Medicare patients receiving at least yearly dental care compared to those who receive none, could be as follows:



Medicare patients and type 2 diabetes  
**\$7,188 cost savings**



Medicare patients and stroke  
**\$8,560 cost savings**



Medicare patients and heart disease  
**\$3,291 cost savings**



Medicare patients and pregnancy  
**\$1,712 cost savings**

## EMERGENCY ROOM VISITS



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.**

## EMERGENCY ORAL CARE HAS NEGATIVE IMPACTS ON EDUCATION AND WORK

Poor oral health is associated with unplanned lost hours at work or school, which may affect your productivity, financial status or more.



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



Not being able to afford dental care was positively associated with **more work hours lost** in unplanned care.

## TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR ORAL HEALTH

Prevention is the key to reducing the long-term costs of poor oral health, here's how you can help yourself and the people around you:



**Brush and floss twice a day.** Make sure you schedule regular checkups and cleanings with your dentist.



**Help spread the word** by writing to members of Congress about the importance of oral healthcare coverage.