



DENTAL CARE IS HEALTHCARE

ORAL HEALTH RECOMMENDATIONS

- Health reform must guarantee coverage for all Americans and access to high-quality, cost effective oral health services.
- Oral health benefits should include diagnostic, preventive, basic restorative, and primary oral health care services necessary to prevent disease and promote oral health, and eliminate pain, suffering and infection.
- Any entity established to make recommendations on coverage, quality, prevention and access must include an oral health expert and make recommendations on oral health for all Americans.
- Support adequate funding for Title VII General and Pediatric Dentistry Residency Training Programs.

BACKGROUND

- Oral health is essential to overall health.¹ Oral diseases are common, costly to medical insurance if left untreated, and consequential to eating, speaking, employment, and learning.
- Oral conditions worsen many medical conditions including diabetes and cardiovascular disease and are associated with poorer pregnancy outcomes.
- A third of all adults lack dental coverage.² For every child lacking medical coverage, two lack dental coverage.
- Parents cite dental problems as the most unmet healthcare need of their children.³
- Most oral diseases are preventable and prevention services and early dental treatment is cost effective.
- Having dental coverage increases use of cost-effective dental prevention services.⁴
- 3-in-5 women do not receive a dental visit while pregnant, yet poor dental health increases risk for premature birth and tooth decay transmission to children.

¹ Surgeon General's Report, *Oral Health in America*

² Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Medical Panel Expenditure Survey

³ Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, National Survey of Children's Health

⁴ Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Medical Panel Expenditure Survey



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Oral Health America improves the health of the public by eliminating oral disease, especially for our most vulnerable citizens, by educating and empowering communities to provide access to care, and advocating for policies that create oral health parity.