

# A STATE OF DECAY

ARE OLDER AMERICANS COMING OF AGE WITHOUT ORAL HEALTHCARE?

Growing Population:

**74M**

older adults  
by 2030<sup>1</sup>

From 2008 to 2010:

**4M ER VISITS**

involved a dental condition<sup>2</sup>

Hospital Treatments:

**10x**

more expensive than  
routine care<sup>2</sup>

Maintaining good oral health as an older adult is a daily challenge, and one which may be out of their control to address because of barriers such as...

## National: Lack of Coverage



59% of lower income older adults have no dental insurance

**2.5x**

Older adults with dental insurance are 2.5 times more likely to visit the dentist on a regular basis<sup>3</sup>



58% of lower income older adults have no plan in place to pay for dental care once retired

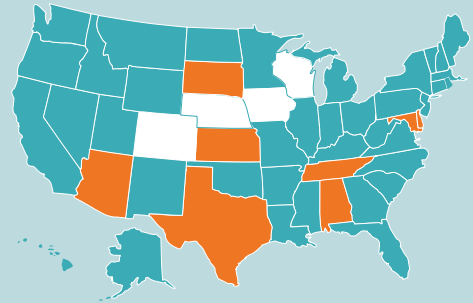


52% of all older adults are either unsure or don't know Medicare does not include dental coverage

## State: Inadequate Policies

**8 STATES**  
cover no  
dental services

**4 STATES**  
cover all  
dental services



for services through adult Medicaid Dental Benefits<sup>4</sup>

**5 STATES** still have 60 percent or more residents living in communities unprotected by fluoridated water

**23 STATES** have never completed a Basic Screening Survey of older adults and have no plan to do so

**42 STATES** lack a State Oral Health Plan that mentions older adults and has SMART objectives

## National: Recommendations

- 1 Support policies that allow older adults to live healthy & independently, such as the Older Americans Act
- 2 Support policies that recognize caregivers, such as the RAISE Family Caregivers Act
- 3 Advocate for financially viable Medicare Dental Benefits

## State: Recommendations

- 1 Establish or reinstate dental benefits for older adults in Medicaid
- 2 Sustain or advocate for Community Water Fluoridation
- 3 Include specific objectives for older adults in State Oral Health Plans
- 4 Develop surveillance of older adults' oral health status through Basic Screening Surveys

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To read the full *A State of Decay*, Vol. III report, visit [toothwisdom.org/stateofdecay](http://toothwisdom.org/stateofdecay).

Data and recommendations derived from Oral Health America's 2015 Public Opinion Poll, conducted by Harris Interactive, Oral Health America's *A State of Decay*, Vol. III report and the following sources:

1. U.S.Census Bureau, (2014). Population Division, Table 9. Projections of the Population by Sex and Age for the United States: 2015 to 2060.
2. Allareddy, Veerasathpurush, et al., (2014). Hospital-based Emergency Departments Visits Involving Dental Conditions. *The Journal of the American Dental Association* 145(4): 331-37.
3. Kiyak, H. Asuman & Reichmuth, M. (2005). Barriers to and enablers of older adults' use of dental services. *Journal of Dental Education* 69(9).
4. Medicaid | Medicare | CHIP Services Dental Association. (2015). 2014 National Profile of State Medicaid and CHIP Dental Programs. Unpublished manuscript.