

## NEW ORAL HEALTH DATA REFLECT INEQUITIES, BARRIERS



Mortality rates from the novel coronavirus are [disproportionately high](#) for people of color, generating a vigorous dialogue about health disparities in America. Lacking meaningful medical and dental insurance is one example of how Black and Latino adults can be uniquely vulnerable when a health-related crisis arrives.

Access to routine dental care is limited for many Americans, and low-income adults face a particular challenge because of the cost of care or a lack of coverage through Medicaid or Medicare. Lacking access to preventive services, these Americans are less likely to maintain good oral health. Newly released data from the [National Health and Nutrition Examination \(NHANES\) survey \(2017-18\)](#) reveals that oral health inequities persist. See full results from the DentaQuest Partnership's analysis of [unplanned dental visits](#), [trends over time](#), and inequities by [race](#) and [income](#).

### TOP REASONS FOR UNPLANNED DENTAL VISITS

**63%** of the population had a dental visit within the past 12 months;



nearly **1 in 13** of these visits were for **unplanned dental services** due to pain or another problem.



Nearly **1 in 4** dental visits made by those in “near poor”<sup>1</sup> families were unplanned due to pain or another problem.



People in these families were **more than twice as likely** as high-income families<sup>2</sup> to have an **unplanned dental visit**.

<sup>1</sup>Between 100% and 124% of the federal poverty line  
<sup>2</sup>More than 400% of the federal poverty line

### UNMET DENTAL NEEDS ARE COMMON AND HAVE A PROFOUND IMPACT



Americans living in poverty are **2.2x more likely** than those at higher incomes to have **unmet dental needs** due to **lack of insurance coverage**.



Those living in poverty are **102x more likely** to have **difficulty doing their job** because of oral health conditions and they are **215x more likely** to have **oral pain** than those at high incomes.

## RACIAL DISPARITIES PERSIST IN ACCESS TO ORAL HEALTH



22%

Black adults are **22% less likely** than White adults to have had a **routine dental visit** in the past year.



68%

Black adults are **68% more likely** than White adults to have **unmet dental needs**.



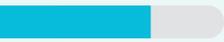
52%

Latino adults are **52% more likely** than White adults to report having **difficulty doing their job** very often or fairly often **due to poor oral health**.

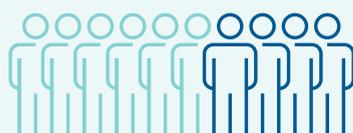
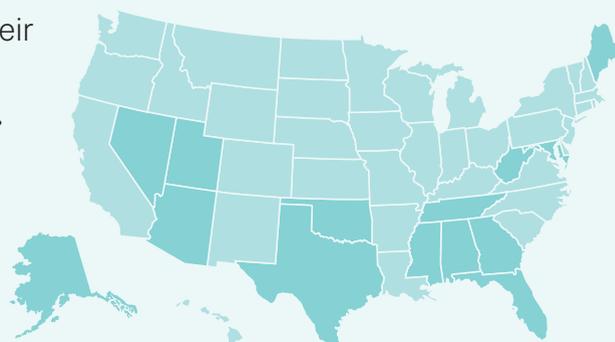
## LACK OF DENTAL INSURANCE COVERAGE MATTERS

Whether people see a dentist is affected by their awareness that **certain procedures are not covered by their public or private insurance**.

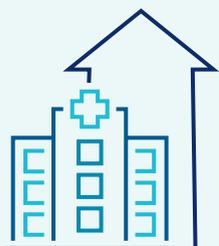
2013-14  2%

2017-18  4%

The percentage of Americans who cited this factor **has doubled** since 2013-14.



Nearly **4 in 10 Black and Latino adults** [reside in one of the 14 states](#) where Medicaid's adult dental benefits cover **no services or emergency-only care**.



A lack of access to dental care, due to COVID-19 closures, may lead to **increased hospital emergency departments (EDs) visits**, which are currently under tremendous stress in many communities due to the influx of COVID-19 patients.

### SUGGESTED CITATION:

DentaQuest Partnership for Oral Health Advancement. May 2020. *New Oral Health Data Reflect Inequities, Barriers*. DentaQuest Partnership for Oral Health Advancement. Boston, MA. DOI:10.35565/DQP.2020.4001

Copyright © 2020 DentaQuest DOI:10.35565/DQP.2020.4001