

A STATE OF DECAY

VOL. IV, 2018

ARE OLDER AMERICANS COMING OF AGE WITHOUT ORAL HEALTHCARE?



One-third of older adults have lost six or more teeth **33%**

Lower income older adults visit the dentist less frequently compared to their higher income counterparts

MEANING...

- Difficulty chewing nutritious foods like fruits and vegetables
- Loss of self-confidence
- Increased risk of chronic disease such as diabetes, heart disease and gum disease



GOOD NEWS! State advocates have taken action to better the oral health of older adults.

Adult Medicaid Dental Benefit

OF THE TOP 13 DENTAL SERVICES USED BY ADULTS 65+ UNDER **MEDICAID**

9

states cover **all**

6

states cover **none**

Community Water Fluoridation

15

states with

90% or more

of its communities receiving fluoridated water

State Oral Health Plan

34 states have **SOHPs**

31 include older adults

12 use **SMART** objectives

Basic Screening Survey

34 states either have completed a BSS for older adults or are planning to do so

6 completed a local pilot BSS between 2013–2017

10 completed a statewide BSS between 2013–2017

Prioritize the oral health of older adults with these **POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Reinstate, establish, or maintain an **extensive adult Medicaid dental benefit**
- Integrate **comprehensive dental coverage in Medicare**
- Sustain or expand **community water fluoridation**
- Include **specific objectives for older adults in all State Oral Health Plans**
- Conduct **Basic Screening Surveys of older adults in all states**



Data from OHA's *A State of Decay*, Vol. IV report available at astateofdecay.org

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