

**State Oral health Improvement Plan for Disadvantaged Floridians
Burden of Oral Diseases and Contributing Factors
Background Overview**

The Burden of Oral Diseases and Disorders¹⁴

Dental diseases and disorders can affect our ability to eat, the foods we choose, how we look, and the way we communicate. They can affect economic productivity and compromise our ability to work at home, at school, or on the job. The array of oral, dental, and craniofacial diseases and conditions that can affect the U.S. population is extensive. Infectious diseases, notably tooth decay and the gum diseases, predominate. Nearly every American has or will experience oral disease during their lifetime. However, not all Americans are achieving the same degree of oral health. Oral health disparities exist across vulnerable and disenfranchised populations of all ages – poor children, the elderly, the disabled and medically compromised, rural populations, the homeless, migrants, immigrants, refugees, and many members of ethnic and racial minority groups suffer a disproportionate burden of oral disease and disorders.

- Dental caries (tooth decay) is the single most common chronic childhood disease—5 times more common than asthma and 7 times more common than hay fever.
- Over 50 percent of 5- to 9-year-old children have at least one cavity or filling, and that proportion increases to 78 percent among 17-year-olds.
- More than 51 million school hours are lost each year to dental-related illness.
- Poor children suffer twice as much dental caries as their more affluent peers, and their disease is more likely to be untreated. Moreover, 25 percent of poor children have not seen a dentist before entering kindergarten.
- Poor children suffer nearly 12 times more restricted-activity days than children from higher-income families.
- Cleft lip/palate, one of the most common birth defects, is estimated to affect 1 out of 600 live births for Whites and 1 out of 1,850 live births for Blacks.
- Most adults show signs of gum or periodontal diseases.
- Severe gum disease affects about 14 percent of adults aged 45 to 54 and 23 percent of 65- to 74-year-olds.
- Clinical symptoms of viral infections, such as herpes labialis (cold sores), and oral ulcers (canker sores) affect about 19 percent of adults 25 to 44 years of age.
- Twenty-two percent of adults reported some form of oral-facial pain in the past 6 months. Women are twice as likely as men to report two specific types of oral-facial pain, jaw joint pain and face/cheek pain. Adults living in poverty were more likely to report toothaches than adults living above the poverty level.
- Employed adults lose more than 164 million hours of work each year due to dental disease or dental visits.
- A little less than two thirds of adults report having visited a dentist in the past 12 months.
- Adults with incomes at or above the poverty level are twice as likely to report a dental visit in the past 12 months as those who are below the poverty level.
- About 30 percent of adults 65 years and older are missing all of their teeth. These figures are higher for those persons living in poverty.



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- Oral and pharyngeal cancers are diagnosed in about 30,000 Americans annually. These cancers are primarily diagnosed in the elderly. Oral cancers are the 7th most common cancers found among White males, 4th most common among Black men, and the 14th most common among all U.S. women.
- Approximately, 8,000 persons die from these oral and pharyngeal cancers each year - The Incidence, mortality, and survival rates vary by gender and by race. The incidence in males is 2.6 times that in females. The incidence rate was highest for Black males (20.8 per 100,000 compared to 14.9 per 100,000 for White males Black males. Among females, the incidence rates for Whites and Blacks are comparable. Mortality in males is more than twice that found in females and mortality in Blacks is about twice that of Whites, with Black males having four times the mortality rate of Black females.
- Florida has the 5th highest oral cancer mortality rate in the country.
- Most elderly Americans take both prescription and over-the counter drugs. There is a high probability that at least one medication that the elderly use will have an oral side effect—usually dry mouth.

Factors Affecting Dental Disease Burdens and Dental Services Utilization¹⁴

There are a number of factors that contribute to oral health and subsequently general health and well-being. Individual biology and genetics; the environment; access to care; the organization of health care; and personal behaviors and lifestyle all interact over the life span and determine the health of individuals, population groups, and communities.

- Prevention Services

Prevention Service	National	Florida
Sealant Utilization	(1988-94) ¹⁵	(2001) ¹⁶
• Children aged 8 years	23 percent	30 percent
• Adolescents aged 14	15 percent	22 percent
Community Water Fluoridation of public water supplies (2000) ¹⁷	65.8 percent	62.3 percent (recent decisions to begin fluoridation in Pinellas, West Palm, and Orange counties will bring this percentage up to 79.0 percent)

- Dental Workforce (active)

Dental Workforce	National ¹⁸	Florida ¹⁹
Dentists (2004)	153,000	8869
Pediatric Dentists (2001)	3900	250
Dental Hygienists (2004)	148,000	8865
Dental Assistants (2004)	266,000	N/A

- Dental Health Professional Shortage Areas (DHPSA) (as of July 2004)²⁰
National – 10,789
Florida - 327
- Education - twice as many individuals with at least 13 years or more of education had a dental visit during a year, than did individuals with less than 12 years of education.
- Financing dental services remains one of the most significant barriers to obtaining necessary oral care. Of persons below the 150 percent of the federal poverty level, 16.4 percent had unmet dental wants and needs, compared to only 6.3 percent of families above the 150 percent poverty level. Moreover, of persons with incomes at or above the FPL are twice as likely to report a dental visit in the past 12 months as those who are below the FPL.
- Health insurance is a strong predictor of access to dental care. Approximately 44 million Americans lack medical insurance and about 108 million lack dental insurance.
- For each child without medical insurance, there are at least 2.6 children without dental insurance.
- Uninsured children are 2.5 times less likely than insured children to receive dental care.
- Children from families without dental insurance are 3 times more likely to have dental needs than children with either public or private insurance.
- Many elderly individuals lose their dental insurance when they retire.
- Nationally, one in five Medicaid-eligible children utilize dental services. While in Florida only 22 percent of Medicaid-eligible children utilized dental services.
- Nationally, only 1 percent of total Medicaid expenditures are on dental services.

Florida Infrastructure²¹⁻²³

- Florida Medicaid expenditures on health care services – \$9.9 billion.
- Florida Medicaid expenditures on dental health services - \$84.3 million (or less 1% of Total Florida Medicaid expenditures)
- Number of county health departments with a dental program – 40 (34 on-site and 6 off-site).
- Number of volunteer services – 44 affiliates with 1400 volunteer dentists who serve 29,000 Floridians.
- Number of school-based or school linked dental services -10
- Number of community-based dental clinics – 142
- Number of community health centers with a dental component - 18
- Number of accredited dental schools - 2
- Number of accredited dental hygiene schools - 16
- Number of accredited dental assisting schools - 21

Florida Demographics

Demographic ¹⁻¹³	National	Florida
Total Population (2000)	282.4 million	16.0 million
Children (under 18 years of age) (2000)	72.6 million	3.6 million
Elderly (65 years of age and older)	35.0 million	2.7 million (and growing)
Whites (2000)	212 million	12.5 million
Blacks(2000)	34.7 million	2.2 million
Hispanic(2000)	35.3 million	2.7 million
Person below 200% Federal Poverty Level (FPL) (1999)	34.2 million	2.0 million
Children below 200% FPL (1999)	5.7 million	628,000
Disabled (age 5+) (2000)	49.7 million	3.3 million
Developmentally Disabled (2002)	12.3 million	533,500
Persons with HIV/AIDS (2002)	529,000	70,200
Children with HIV/AIDS (2002)	3700	650
Rural population (70.6 million	4.0 million
Homeless persons (2001)	2.0 million	67,980
Homeless children (2001)	500,000	18,490
Homeless elderly (over 55) (2001)	560,000	3466
Migrants (2000)	3.0 million	197,182
Immigrants and Refugees (2000)	31 million	2.7 million
Incarcerated (2002)	2.0 million	79,322

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