

# # Oral Health Matters

August 29, 2018

## Oral Disease a Prevalent Comorbidity Related to Addiction: The Role of Oral Health in Treatment and Recovery



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# WHY Oral Health Matters?

- It's not just teeth!
- Mouth, tissue, bone, teeth
- Ability to be healthy and functional – eat, speak, smile, kiss

“Live, laugh, love across the lifespan”



# Impact of Dental Disease and Poor Oral Health

## **Medical - Dental Condition**

- Infection - decayed teeth
- Gum disease with inflammation and bleeding
- Fungal and viral infections in the mouth and head
- Pain and pain management needs
- Impact on full body and body systems

## **Impaired Function**

- Broken, decayed teeth that result in difficulty biting, chewing and digesting
- Difficulty speaking and communicating clearly
- Difficulty concentrating and focusing

# IT'S ALL CONNECTED

The health of the mouth influences other aspects of health—and vice versa.

## THE MENTAL HEALTH — MOUTH-HEALTH CONNECTION

Any serious or chronic pain issue can hamper mental health and daily life. If there is a painful injury or illness in the mouth, it's likely to get in the way of normal functions like smiling, eating, or talking – and also take a toll on mood.<sup>1</sup>

## THE FAMILY HEALTH— MOUTH-HEALTH CONNECTION

Babies naturally pick up bacteria from their surroundings that builds the immune system. Families with healthy mouths pass on helpful bacteria to babies, but if there is untreated oral disease in the family, infants can be exposed to the germs that cause cavities.<sup>2</sup>

## THE MEDICINE — MOUTH-HEALTH CONNECTION

Some medications — like decongestants, antihistamines, or painkillers— can cause a dry mouth. Because saliva protects the mouth from the harmful bacteria that cause cavities and gum disease, the dry mouth "side effect" is one way that issues in other parts of the body influence oral health.<sup>3</sup>

## THE IMMUNE SYSTEM — MOUTH-HEALTH CONNECTION

Because the mouth is an important part of the immune system, a healthy mouth boosts the body's ability to protect against disease. Auto-immune diseases, like Celiac disease or lupus, can cause swelling in the mouth. In turn, inflammation can set off other health problems.<sup>4</sup>

## THE VITAL ORGAN — MOUTH-HEALTH CONNECTION

Endocarditis, a heart infection, is often caused when bacteria from another part of the body gets into the bloodstream and spreads to the heart. It is also possible for infections in the mouth to spread to the brain. This is why gum disease is a serious infection that shouldn't be ignored.<sup>5</sup>

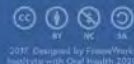
## THE DIABETES — MOUTH-HEALTH CONNECTION

Diabetes can harm the mouth, and problems in the mouth make it harder to control diabetes. Uncontrolled blood sugar can cause swollen gums, which disrupts the mouth's natural defenses and makes cavities more likely. That's why oral health care is an important part of diabetes management.<sup>6</sup>

**It's all connected!**

A practical approach to health includes oral health in planning, policy, and practices.

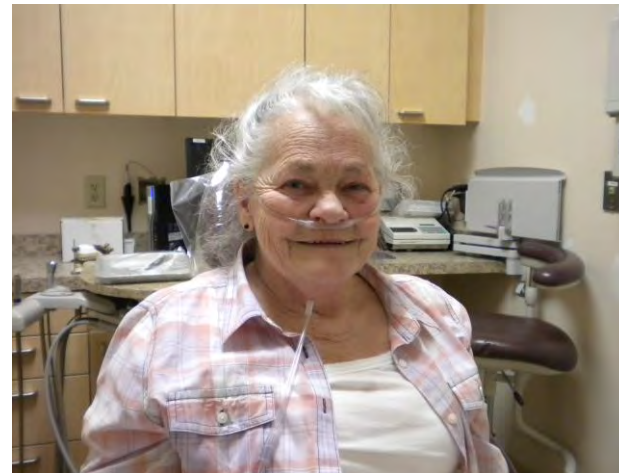
1. American Pain Society. 2015. "Acute pain, chronic pain, relationship with affect, daily functioning, impairment, and resiliability related to life goals."  
2. PLoS Biology. 2013. "How Kids Get It: The University of Maternal Periodontal Transmission."  
3. Mayo Clinic. 2016. "Oral health: A window to your overall health."  
4. Harvard Medical School Healthbeat  
5. Journal of the American Dental Association. 2009. "Bacterial and systemic risk factors for infective endocarditis."  
6. American Diabetes Association. 2014. "Diabetes and Oral Health Problems."



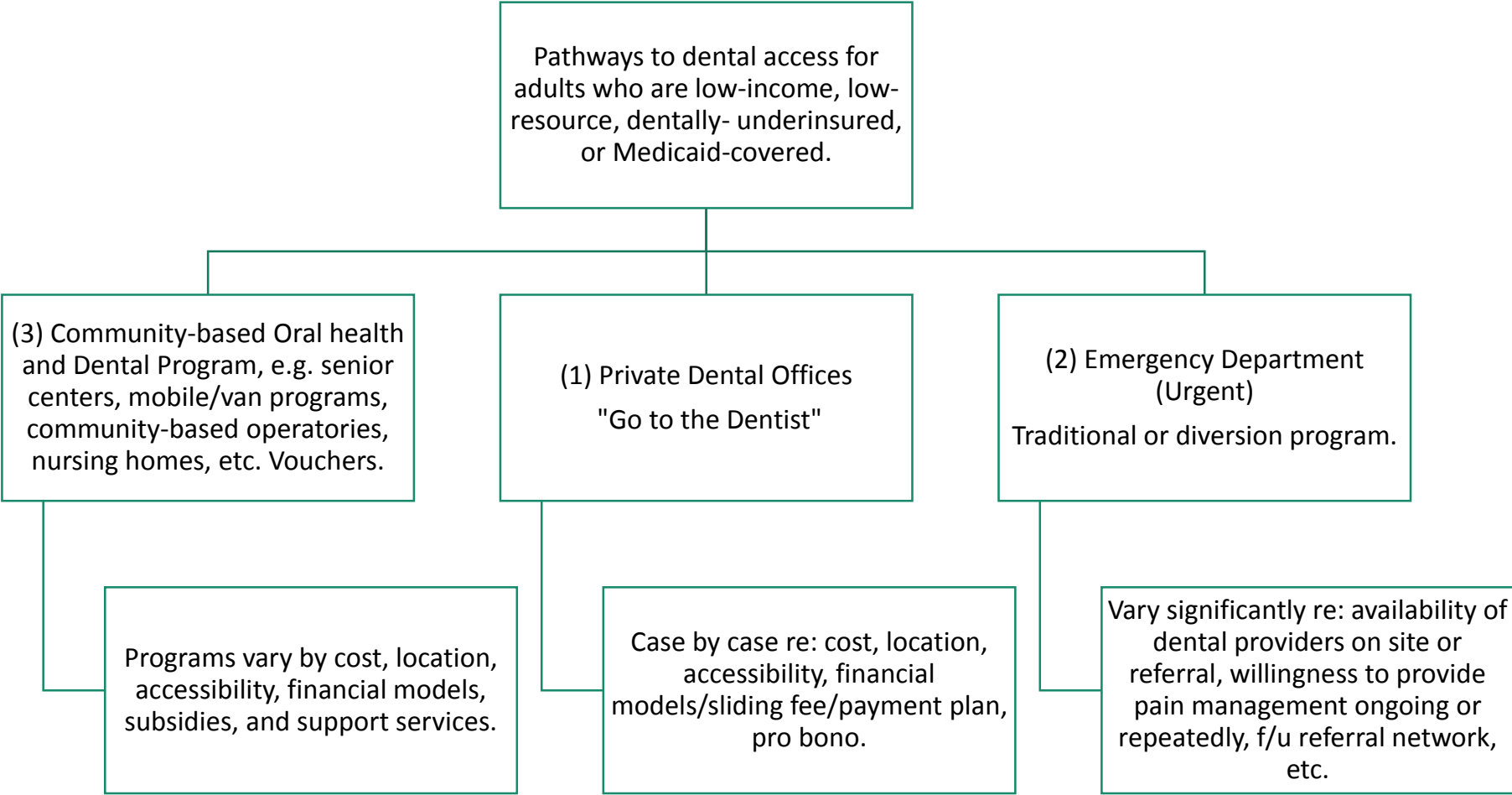
2017. Designed by FromeWorks  
In collaboration with Oral Health 2020.

- Diabetes
- Heart disease
- Osteoporosis
- Inflammatory disease
- Sepsis - infection
- Chronic pain leading to alcohol and drug use and relapse risk
- Depression
- Aspiration pneumonia/respiratory illness
- Oral cancers
- Dry mouth
- Nutritional issues
- Speech difficulties
- Poor self-image

“If you’re not managing oral disease, you aren’t managing health care... or its cost.”



# Pathways to Oral Health Access: Forks in the Road



# NH Financial and Benefit Considerations

- Cash or credit payment options
- Commercial Dental insurance
  - Availability of insurers
  - Expenses including co-pays, deductibles and caps
  - Scope of coverage – what services are provided? How often? By whom?
  - Prevention v. restorative needs
- NH Medicaid
  - Children – Comprehensive
  - Adults – Limited benefit, “emergency-only” with antibiotics, pain management and extractions. No dentures.
- Medicare – Traditional
  - Traditional has no dental coverage
  - Advantage may provide a “value-added” benefit that is defined by the insurer



# NH Oral Health Baseline Survey I

April 2017 [www.nhoralhealth.org](http://www.nhoralhealth.org)

## Identifying Oral Health Resources and Promising Practices in Community-based, Non-traditional Settings

An inventory and examination of the state's community-based oral health programs with consideration of promising and best practice criteria for use by providers, policy-makers, program planners and consumers.





# NH Oral Health Coalition Baseline Survey | Interactive GIS Map



**[www.nhoralhealth.org](http://www.nhoralhealth.org) and click on the GIS Map Link**

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