

## Ohio State of the State 2024

# Dental Insurance Coverage and Oral Health



CareQuest Institute for Oral Health's annual State of Oral Health Equity in America survey asked over 9,000 adults about visiting a dentist and about dental benefits included in Medicaid and Medicare. Overall, 94% of surveyed adults agree or strongly agree that Medicare should cover dental care, and 93% agree or strongly agree that Medicaid in their state should cover dental care.

### Ohioans Visiting the Dentist

- In 2024, **67%** of adults in Ohio saw a dentist in the past year; **8%** had an oral health problem but did not visit a dentist because of cost.
  - Nationally, 68% of adults saw a dentist in the prior year, and 8% did not visit a dentist for an oral health problem because of cost.
- **Nineteen percent** of Ohio adults did not have *dental* coverage in 2024, compared to **9%** who did not have *health* insurance. **Three percent** of adults in Ohio visited a hospital emergency department — instead of a dental office — for dental care in 2024, with charges for these visits reaching as much as **\$520 million**.<sup>1</sup>
  - Nationally, 26% of adults lacked *dental* coverage in 2024, while 9% lacked *health* insurance. Four percent of adults sought dental care in an emergency department nationally.
- **Thirty-seven percent** of adults in Ohio report having at least one chronic health condition in 2024. Poor oral health is linked with chronic health conditions like [diabetes](#), [cardiovascular disease](#), and [dementia](#).
  - Nationally in 2024, 36% of adults reported having at least one chronic health condition.

<sup>1</sup> Annual costs for emergency department visits for dental care are based on cost estimates from CareQuest Institute for Oral Health, [Recent Trends in Hospital ED Visits for Non-Traumatic Dental Conditions](#), Boston, MA: 2022; and US Census Bureau, [State Population by Characteristics: 2020–2023](#), Washington, DC: 2023.

### Ohioans' Thoughts on Medicaid and Medicare Dental Coverage

- Ohio's Medicaid program [does include an adult dental benefit](#) in addition to covering dental care for children. **Eighty percent** of adults in Ohio say that dental benefits for both adults and children are included in their state's Medicaid program, and **94%** agree or strongly agree that Medicaid in their state should cover dental care.
- Traditional Medicare through the federal government [does not currently include a dental benefit](#). **Sixty percent** of adults in Ohio say dental benefits are not covered by traditional Medicare, and **96%** agree or strongly agree that Medicare should cover dental care.

### Take Action for Oral Health!

This election season is a key moment to raise the profile of oral health as a critical health policy issue among candidates. The Oral Health Progress and Equity Network (OPEN) has developed an advocacy toolkit with informational one-pagers, sample social media, and more to make outreach to candidates easy. **To learn more, visit the [OPEN Advocacy Toolkit](#).**



To learn more about adult dental benefits in Medicaid and Medicare, visit [carequest.org/topics/adult-dental-benefit](https://carequest.org/topics/adult-dental-benefit)

**Source:** CareQuest Institute for Oral Health conducted a national poll of 9,307 adults between March 14 and May 24, 2024, through the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago AmeriSpeak® panel. The margin of error rate is +1.44%. State estimates were derived from state-specific oversamples. Methodology details are available upon request at [analytics@carequest.org](mailto:analytics@carequest.org).