

9 in 10 Voters Support Dental Coverage for Older or Disabled Americans and Veterans

Oral health policy issues have often been left out of political discourse, despite long-standing, bipartisan popularity. **New national research finds broad, bipartisan support for dental coverage and strong voter interest in making oral health a policy priority.** The polling finds that dental coverage policies are some of the most universally supported health policy issues, attracting substantial support across the political spectrum.

Top Findings

Issue	Percentage (%) who “like” or “love” the reform	
	Democratic Voters	Republican Voters
Expand Medicare to include oral health coverage for older or disabled Americans	98%	86%
Expand VA dental coverage to ensure all veterans qualify for dental services	96%	90%
Incentivize dentists to accept all types of insurance, including Medicaid and Medicare	95%	80%

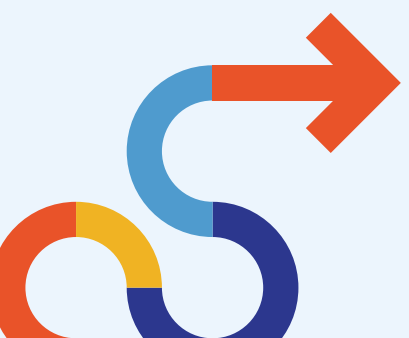
Medicare Dental Is a Uniquely Bipartisan Issue

9 in 10 voters support Medicare dental, including 96% of Democrats, 86% of Republicans, and 92% of Independents. The importance voters place on the issue is also clear:

- **78% consider the lack of dental coverage in Medicare a “crisis” or “major problem.”**
- **Approximately two-thirds of voters “love” the reform**, including about half of Republicans.
- **Opposition is limited:** among the few voters who do not express support, most are undecided or have no opinion rather than actively opposed.
- **Voters largely believe that workers have paid into Medicare throughout their adult lives**, and it is only fair that Medicare covers dental care.

Voter Perspectives on Oral Health Policy

CareQuest Institute for Oral Health partnered with Marketing for Change to conduct voter research examining how oral health policies continue to resonate with voters in the current political landscape — and how oral health policy change could help deliver on top voter concerns. The research, conducted in July and August, employed a mixed-methods approach that combined focus groups and an online discussion board with 50 persuadable voters in competitive congressional districts, alongside a national online survey of 1,027 likely voters. The survey has a margin of error of ± 3.5 percentage points.



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Veterans' Dental Coverage Also Has Broad Bipartisan Support

Improving dental coverage so that all veterans qualify for dental services receives **support from 96% of Democrats and 90% of Republicans**. The findings reinforce broad public support for ensuring veterans can access the oral health care they need.

- Of more than 9 million veterans who are eligible for medical care through the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), **only 26% are eligible for dental care**.
- Veterans face significant oral health challenges that **contribute to broader health and financial burdens**.
- Expanding access to dental care for veterans is not only critical for improving veterans' health, but also a cost-saving investment: Treating gum disease among just 25% of veterans could **save nearly \$3 billion annually in health care costs** for heart disease and diabetes.

Voters See Oral Health as Connected to Issues They Already Care About

The research identified several themes that resonate with voters across the political spectrum, and in rural and urban areas.

Affordability

The cost of health care remains a top concern for Americans, including the cost of dental care.

Choice

Voters value having more choices in providers, coverage, and how they access care, and see improvements in Medicare, Medicaid, and VA dental coverage as an important step to having more oral health care choices.

Prevention

Americans recognize the value of preventing oral health problems before they become more serious and costly.

Fairness and Opportunity

Voters respond to the idea that everyone should have a fair opportunity to be healthy, regardless of where they live.

