

# Americans Want and Need Dental Coverage in Medicare

September 2021, West Health / NORC AmeriSpeak® survey



## MEDICARE FACTS



Medicare does **NOT** currently cover:

- Preventive and routine care, such as check-ups, cleanings, x-rays, fillings
- Major care, such as crowns, bridges, root canals, dentures, oral surgery



**29 million people in Medicare had no dental visit in past year (pre-COVID)<sup>1</sup>**

- Rates of having no dental visits are higher among people who are Black, Hispanic, and/or low-income<sup>1</sup>



**Risks associated with untreated oral health problems:**

- Exacerbation of chronic disease, such as heart disease and diabetes<sup>2</sup>
- Costly Emergency Department visits
- Chronic oral pain and malnourishment
- Tooth loss – 15% of people in Medicare have lost all their teeth<sup>1</sup>

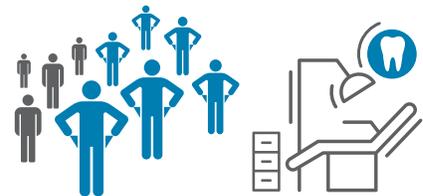
<sup>1</sup> KFF. "Medicare and Dental Coverage: A Closer Look." July 2021.

<sup>2</sup> Kane, Shawn. "The Effects of Oral Health on Systemic Health." General Dentistry, November/December 2017

## WHAT AMERICANS ARE SAYING



**91%** of Americans say **dental** coverage should be **added to Medicare**.



**6 out of 10** Americans say they are **very concerned** or **somewhat concerned** they will need dental care that they **can't afford** when they are older.



**73%** of Americans say that the **high price of drugs** is hindering Medicare's ability to provide a dental benefit for people age **65 and older**.