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)¹
• Rates of having no dental visits are higher among people who are Black, Hispanic, and/or low-income¹

Risks associated with untreated oral health problems:
• Exacerbation of chronic disease, such as heart disease and diabetes²
• Costly Emergency Department visits
• Chronic oral pain and malnourishment
• Tooth loss – 15% of people in Medicare have lost all their teeth¹

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.

² Kane, Shawn. “The Effects of Oral Health on Systemic Health.” General Dentistry, November/December 2017

West Health / NORC AmeriSpeak® survey results are based on a nationally representative sample of 1,071 US households surveyed in September 2021.