



# The Glamorous Life of Teeth

Universal Access

to

Oral Health Care for All Ages

Presented by

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# CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL FACTS ABOUT OLDER ADULTS ORAL HEALTH



By 2060, according to the US Census, the number of US adults aged 65 years or older is expected to reach 98 million, 24% of the overall population.<sup>1</sup> Older Americans with the poorest oral health tend to be those who are economically disadvantaged, lack insurance, and are members of racial and ethnic minorities. Being disabled, homebound, or institutionalized (e.g., seniors who live in nursing homes) also increases the risk of poor oral health. Many older Americans do not have dental insurance because they lost their benefits upon retirement and the federal Medicare program does not cover routine dental care.<sup>2</sup>

## *Oral health problems in older adults include the following:*

- **Untreated tooth decay.** Nearly all adults (96%) aged 65 years or older have had a cavity; 1 in 5 have untreated tooth decay.<sup>3</sup>
- **Gum disease.** A high percentage of older adults have gum disease. About 2 in 3 (68%) adults aged 65 years or older have gum disease.<sup>4</sup>
- **Tooth loss.** Nearly 1 in 5 of adults aged 65 or older have lost all of their teeth. Complete tooth loss is twice as prevalent among adults aged 75 and older (26%) compared with adults aged 65-74 (13%).<sup>3</sup> Having missing teeth or wearing dentures can affect nutrition, because people without teeth or with dentures often prefer soft, easily chewed foods instead of foods such as fresh fruits and vegetables.
- **Oral cancer.** Cancers of the mouth (oral and pharyngeal cancers) are primarily diagnosed in older adults; median age at diagnosis is 62 years.<sup>5</sup>
- **Chronic disease.** Most older Americans take both prescription and over-the-counter drugs; many of these medications can cause dry mouth. Reduced saliva flow increases the risk of cavities.<sup>6</sup>

## References

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Based on the results of a Genesee Health Plan Oral Health Coalition survey, a gap was identified showing that seniors and veterans who are 60 years of age and older have a medical insurance benefit, but they did not have a dental insurance benefit. As a result The Senior Dental Program was created by using innovative and effective ideas to bridge the gap for Genesee County veterans and seniors who do not have a dental insurance benefit. The program is accessible for those seniors who meet certain eligibility guidelines. The Senior Dental Program offers a free dental insurance benefit for preventive services.



# FREE Senior Dental Program

## Dental Coverage Benefits Include:

- Dental Cleanings
- Oral Exams
- Dental Health Education
- X-Rays

*Veterans without dental coverage are encouraged to apply!*

## Program Eligibility:

- Must be 60 years of age or older
- Must be a Genesee County resident
- Must not have any other dental coverage
- Must meet income guidelines



***TO SIGN-UP, CALL US TODAY!***

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## Dental Health Coordinator

Function as Dental Health Navigator by:

1. Assisting with appointment scheduling  
(50 % of enrollees have had their first appointment)
2. Making follow-up phone calls
3. Providing community dental resource referrals
4. Creating community partnerships
5. Advocating for oral health funding for aging population

# Dental Health Coordinator functions continued:

6. Informing client the they have Delta Dental (not Medicaid , Genesee Health Plan or Medicare)
7. Providing client/patient education of insurance benefit coverage
8. Completing dental health assessment (baseline, 3 and 6 months)
9. Maintain record of treatment plans to accurately assess needs
10. Attending community dental outreach activities

# Oral Health Education for Seniors

- 1.Oral Hygiene Techniques including Toothbrushing and Flossing
- 2.Denture Care
- 3.Affects of Oral Health and Overall Health
- 4.Mouth Rinses
- 5.Fluoride



# GENESEE HEALTH PLAN ORAL HEALTH COALITION



The work of the Genesee Health Plan Oral Health Coalition is to further refine and improve the system of oral health care for Genesee County's uninsured and underinsured population.

## Future goals include:

- Increase community education and awareness of the importance of oral health for Genesee County residents of all ages,
- Promote universal access for oral health care for all Genesee County residents,
- Increase access to oral health services by addressing access to full utilization of existing services,
- Advocate for and promote oral health intervention strategies which are based on evidence-based scientific principles,
- Encourage creative approaches to oral health issues affecting our community.

Everything is better with  
a little sparkle and shine.

