



## Fact Sheet

# Oral Health in America Advances and Challenges

*A Report from the National Institutes of Health*

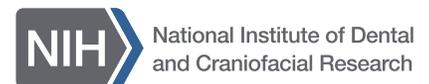
## **Section 1: Effect of Oral Health on the Community, Overall Well-Being, and the Economy**

### Key Summary

- Good oral health supports overall health and well-being of individuals, families, communities, and the nation.
- Based on economic and social factors, some groups experience more disease and more barriers to care than the general population; the result is unacceptable, but reversible, inequities in oral health.
- Commercial interests play a dual role in affecting oral health, providing excellent products that support oral health, as well as products, such as tobacco and sugar-sweetened foods and beverages, that are detrimental to oral health.
- Lack of access to regular dental care can result in ineffective and expensive overuse of emergency departments.
- Poor oral health reduces the economic productivity of society by limiting participation in the workforce, as well as by increasing health care costs.
- Untreated oral disease can postpone entry to military service or delay deployment of troops to active duty, thus jeopardizing the nation's military readiness.
- Natural disasters, the emergence of novel pathogens, such as COVID-19, and other large-scale emergencies underscore the need for public-private partnerships that plan and ensure the continued delivery of essential oral health care in times of crisis.

### Call to Action

- Policy changes are needed to reduce inequities in oral health status and care, ensuring that all Americans can enjoy the benefits of good oral health.



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