

JUSTICE IN AGING

FIGHTING SENIOR POVERTY THROUGH LAW

Oral Health in California: What About Older Adults?

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- All on mute. Use Questions function for substantive questions and for technical concerns.
- Problems with getting on to the webinar? Send an e-mail to acutler@justiceinaging.org
- Slides and a recording are available at justiceinaging.org/resources-for-advocates/webinars/
- See also the chat box for this web address.

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Justice in Aging is a national organization that uses the power of law to fight senior poverty by securing access to affordable health care, economic security, and the courts for older adults with limited resources.

Since 1972 we've focused our efforts primarily on populations that have traditionally lacked legal protection such as women, people of color, LGBT individuals, and people with limited English proficiency.

Today's Discussion

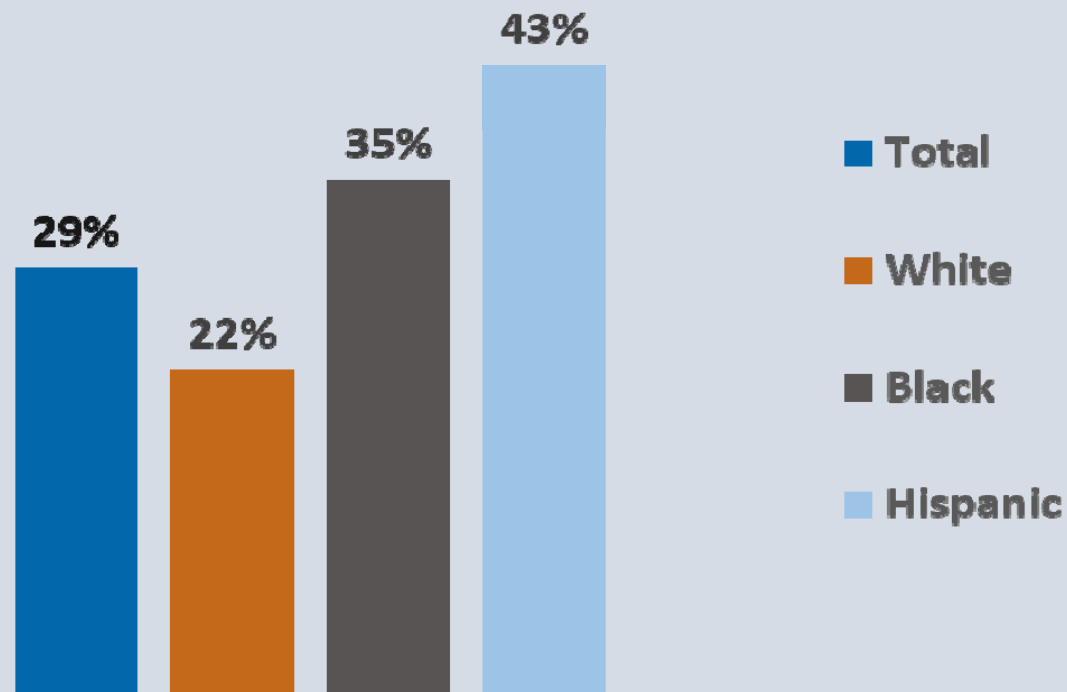
- **State of Oral Health**
- **Denti-Cal**
- **Unique Oral Health Needs of Older Adults**
- **Recommendations**
- **Questions/Discussion**



State of Oral Health for Older Adults

The Oral Health Lifespan

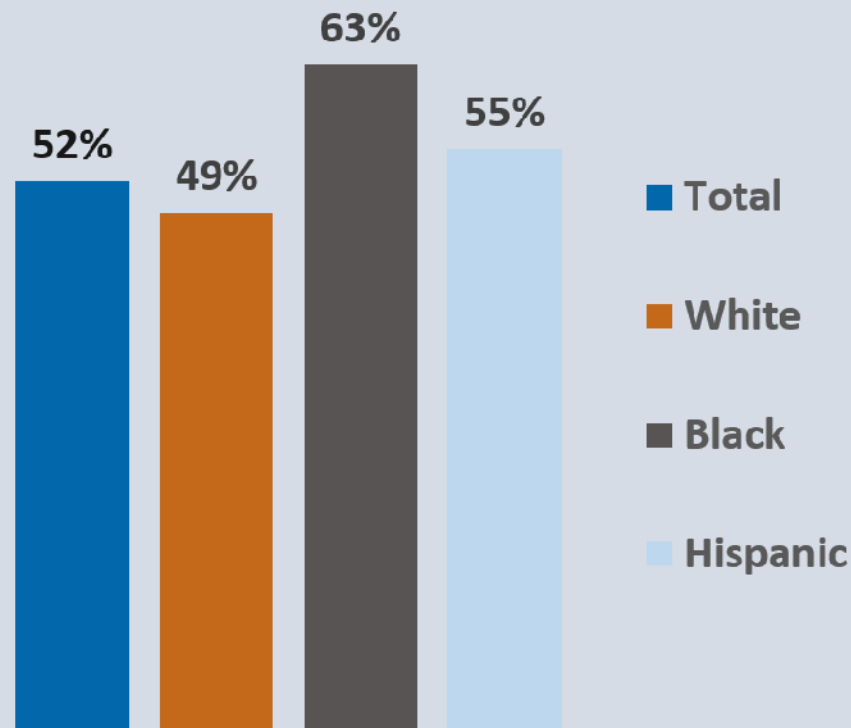
Children and Tooth Decay Disparities Arise Early



The Oral Health Lifespan

Adults 20-64

Loss of Permanent Teeth

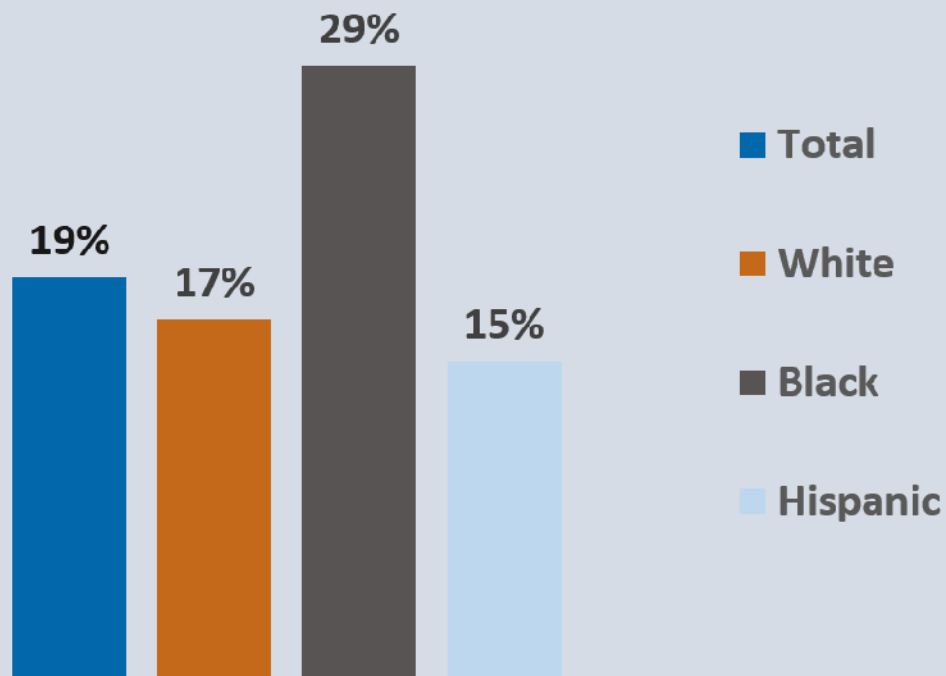


Dental Caries and Tooth Loss in Adults in the US, 2011-2012

The Oral Health Lifespan

Adults 65 and Over

Complete Tooth Loss (Edentulism)

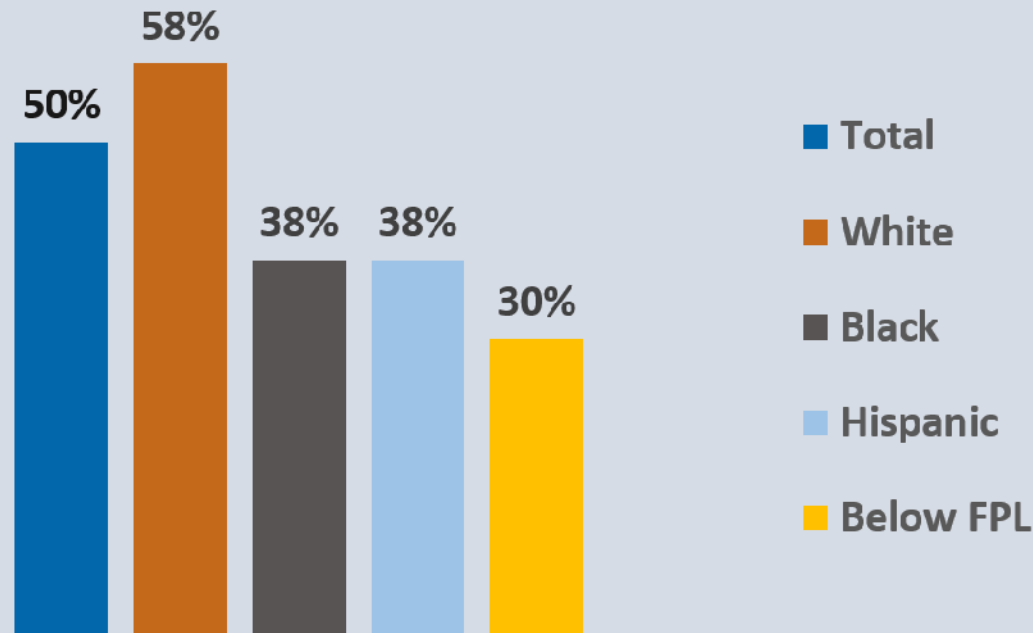


Dental Caries and Tooth Loss in Adults in the US, 2011-2012

The Oral Health Lifespan

Adults 65 and Over

Dental Visit Last Twelve Months



Treatment Needs in Seniors (Age 65 and Over)

California's Low-Income Older Adults

- 38% in SNFs have no natural teeth
- 17% have no upper or bottom dentures
- 42% have untreated decay

Center for Oral Health, preliminary survey results





Denti-Cal

California's Denti-Cal Program

Well-Documented Problems

- **Carve Out**
- **Exceedingly low reimbursement rates**
- **Administrative Burdens**
- **Coverage is not evidence-based**



Unique Oral Health Needs of Older Adults

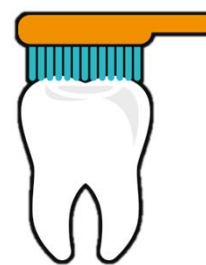
Oral Health Needs Neglected

- California ranked 30th in country
- No State Oral Health Plan
- No older adult basic screening survey

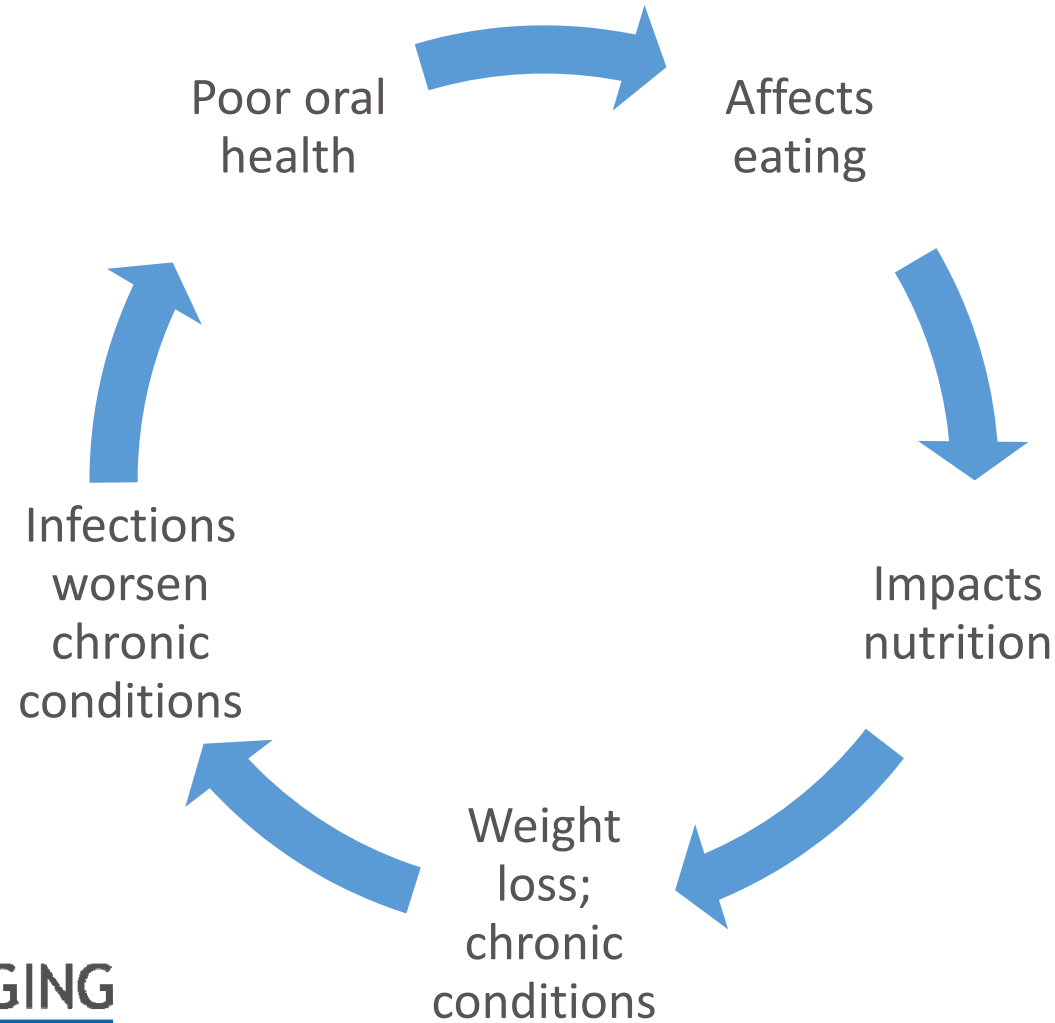


Aging and Oral Health

- Teeth wear and tear
- Gums recede
- Dry mouth
- Physical, mental, sensory impairments impede routine hygiene



Poor Oral Health Affects Overall Health



Shortage of Providers to Treat Older Adults

- Overall shortage
- Dental schools offer little clinical training for treating older adults



Coverage Not Comprehensive and is Confusing

- Medicare – covers little
- Medi-Cal – not comprehensive
- Medicare MA plans – may offer supplemental coverage
- The CARVE OUT



Dental Services are not Co-located with Health Services

- Frequent doctor visits
- More difficult to travel
- Lack of co-located services





Recommendations

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- Adopt recommendations in Little Hoover Commission Report and recent legislation
- Include advocates for older adults in policy discussions
- Expand Denti-Cal coverage (and Medicare)

Recommendations

- Include older adults in state plan
- Conduct a basic needs survey of older adults
- Incentives for treatment of older adults/more providers
- Make co-located services a priority

Resources

- Justice in Aging: justiceinaging.org
- Center for Oral Health: centerfororalhealth.org

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