Adding Dental to Medicare Part B: 31 Million Low-Income Enrollees Would Gain Access to Medicare Coverage

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Adding a dental benefit to Medicare Part B would provide access to all 61 million enrollees in the program. Half have incomes below $26,000 and most others have moderate incomes that are stretched by big dental bills. Only 5% have incomes above $100,000. Medicare dental coverage particularly would help the millions with low incomes who are disproportionately people of color.

Half of People with Medicare Have Incomes Below $26,000

Half of Medicare Enrollees or 31.1 million older adults and people with disabilities have an annual income below $26,200. 15 million or 25% of Medicare enrollees have an annual income below $15,250. Only 5% of Medicare enrollees have incomes above $103,000 annually.

Medicare Enrollees of Color Are Most in Need of a Dental Benefit

The annual income of Medicare enrollees of color is significantly below that of white Medicare enrollees due to ongoing and historic racial discrimination. They are also less likely than white Medicare enrollees to have visited a dentist in the past year and have worse oral health outcomes. Adding a dental benefit to Medicare Part B would help to address these inequities in access to coverage and care.

Median Per Capita Income of Medicare Enrollees by Race/Ethnicity

Percent of Medicare Enrollees Who Did not Visit a Dentist in the Past Year by Race/Ethnicity
Endnotes


