

A Healthy Smile Never Gets Old

A California Report on the Oral Health of Older Adults



BACKGROUND



Background

- Growing population of older adults in the US and California
- Poverty and health disparities precipitate health and well-being of many older adults in CA
- High need for oral health care among community-dwelling older adults (BRFSS)
- Unique needs among institutionalized older adults (residing in long-term care facilities and SNFs)



Background

- Older adults experience unique oral health care needs
- Poor oral health undermines overall health and well-being
 - Diabetes and glycemic control
 - Other chronic conditions - e.g. hypertension, CHD
 - Malnutrition, hunger
 - Acute exacerbation of conditions like aspiration pneumonia
 - Other



Background

- Better oral health will bring cost savings
- Improved data and accountability will help improve care and health outcomes



STUDY METHODOLOGY



Basic Screening Survey

- BSS of Older Adults
- Developed by ASTDD (Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors)
- Non-invasive open-mouth survey
- Research vs public health surveillance - “Screenings”



Study Methodology

- Advisory committee and ASTDD guidelines
- Study sample -
 - Skilled Nursing/ LTC Facilities (n = 36, State-rep.)
 - Community-dwelling Seniors (Convenience sample)
- Survey Instrument and protocol development
- Site recruitment and staff training/ calibration



Study Methodology

- Consents (Combination of implied and active)
- Screening protocols
- Study limitations



Screening form/ Survey instrument

California Elder Smiles – Screening Form			
SITE INFORMATION			
Site ID Code <input type="text"/>	Screening Date <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	Screener ID <input type="text"/>	
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION			
Age <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	Gender MALE <input type="checkbox"/> FEMALE <input type="checkbox"/>	Race/ Ethnicity <input type="checkbox"/> 1 = White 5 = AI/ AN <input type="checkbox"/> 2 = Black 6 = Pacific Islander <input type="checkbox"/> 3 = Hispanic 7 = Multi-racial <input type="checkbox"/> 4 = Asian 9 = Unknown	
ORAL SCREENING INFORMATION			
Do you have a removable upper denture? No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	If yes →	Do you usually wear your upper denture when you eat? No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you have a removable lower denture? No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	If yes →	Do you usually wear your lower denture when you eat? No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	
Functional Posterior Occlusal Contacts <i>(Assess with removable dentures in place)</i>	None <input type="checkbox"/>	One side only <input type="checkbox"/>	Both sides <input type="checkbox"/>
Ask participant to remove partial/ full dentures			
Substantial Oral Debris No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Edentulous <input type="checkbox"/>	Severe Gingival Inflammation No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Edentulous <input type="checkbox"/>
Ask participant to remove partial/ full dentures			
Number of Upper Natural Teeth <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <i>Range: 0 to 16 (Include root fragments)</i>	Number of Lower Natural Teeth <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <i>Range: 0 to 16 (Include root fragments)</i>		
Number of Teeth with Untreated Decay <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	Number of Teeth with Root Fragments <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>		
Number of Teeth with Obvious Mobility <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <i>Range: 0 to 16 (Include root fragments)</i>	Need for Periodontal Care No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Edentulous <input type="checkbox"/>		
Severe Dry Mouth No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Suspicious Soft Tissue Lesion No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		
Treatment Urgency No Obvious Problem <input type="checkbox"/> Early Care <input type="checkbox"/> Urgent Care <input type="checkbox"/> <i>(next scheduled visit) (within next several weeks) (within next week – pain/ infection)</i>	Comments:		
DO NOT LEAVE ANY FIELD BLANK			



SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS



Sample Characteristics

VARIABLE	SENIORS SCREENED - N (Weighted %)	SENIORS SCREENED - N (%)
	SKILLED NURSING FACILITIES (n = 36)	COMMUNITY SITES (n = 51)
TOTAL SCREENED	1,193	1,179
AGE		
65 to 75 years	370 (25.2%)	577 (48.9 %)
76 to 85 years	398 (34.2%)	383 (32.5 %)
> 85 years	392 (40.1%)	205 (17.4 %)
Unknown/ missing	33 (0.5%)	14 (0.01 %)
GENDER		
Male	412 (29.3%)	410 (34.9 %)
Female	774 (70.7%)	766 (65.1 %)
Unknown/ missing	7 (0.01%)	3 (0.001%)
RACE/ ETHNICITY		
Non-Hispanic White	640 (68.8%)	291 (24.7 %)
Non-Hispanic Black	93 (4.9%)	75 (6.4 %)
Hispanic	194 (10.5 %)	397 (33.7 %)
Other	191 (13.2 %)	384 (32.6 %)
Unknown/ missing	75 (2.6%)	32 (2.7 %)
REGION		
Rural	152 (48.5 %)	-
Urban	1041 (51.5 %)	-



KEY FINDINGS



ORGANIZATION OF FINDINGS

- Skilled Nursing Home Residents
(Statewide, representative sample)
- Community-dwelling older adults
(Statewide, convenience sample)



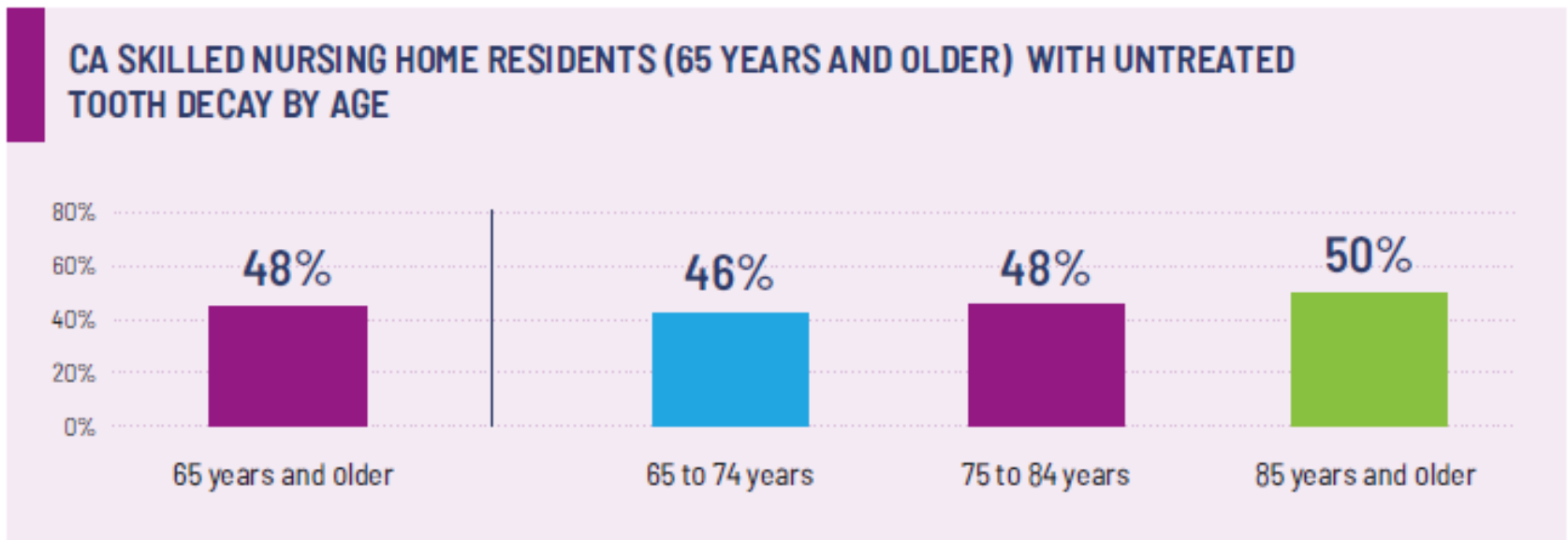
KEY FINDING # 1

Large percentage of older adults suffer from untreated dental decay.



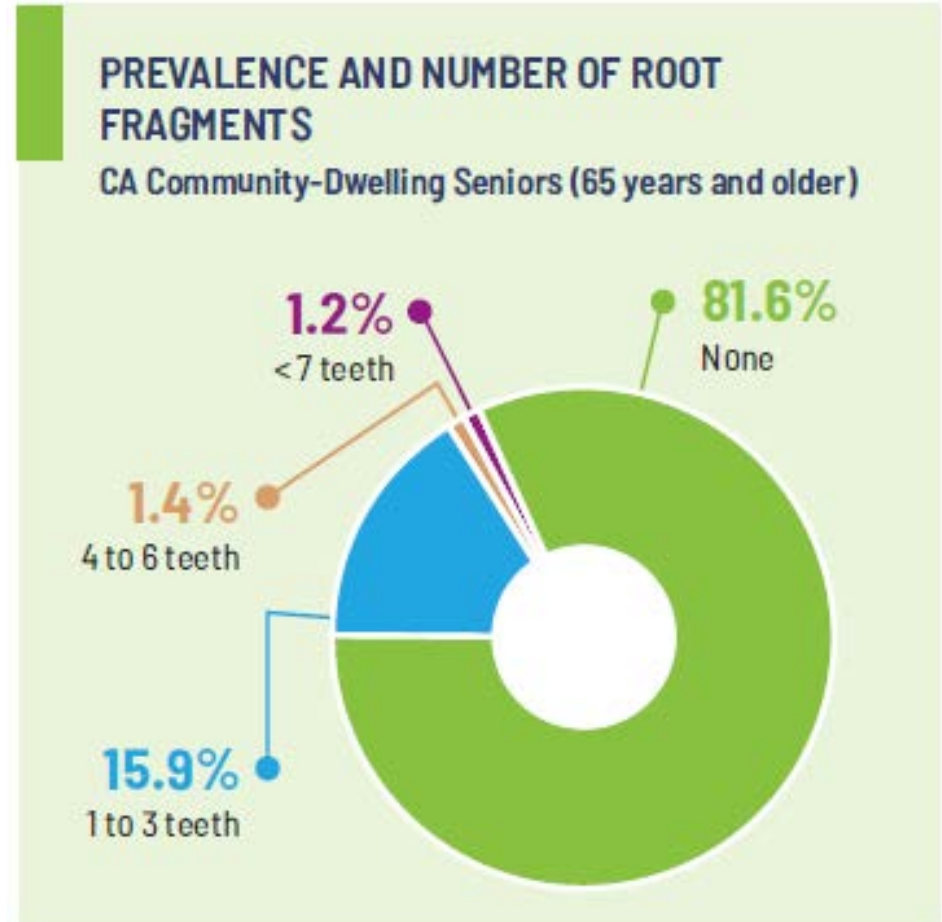
Key Finding # 1: Skilled Nursing Residents

- Nearly half the older adults residing in skilled nursing facilities have untreated tooth decay.
- The rate of untreated tooth decay was highest among adults aged 85 years and older.



Key Finding # 1: Community-Dwelling

- More than one in three older adults suffer from untreated tooth decay
- Nearly 20% of the older adults screened, had one or more decayed root fragments in their mouth.



KEY FINDING # 2

Untreated tooth decay is leading to a high prevalence of tooth loss in older adults in California.



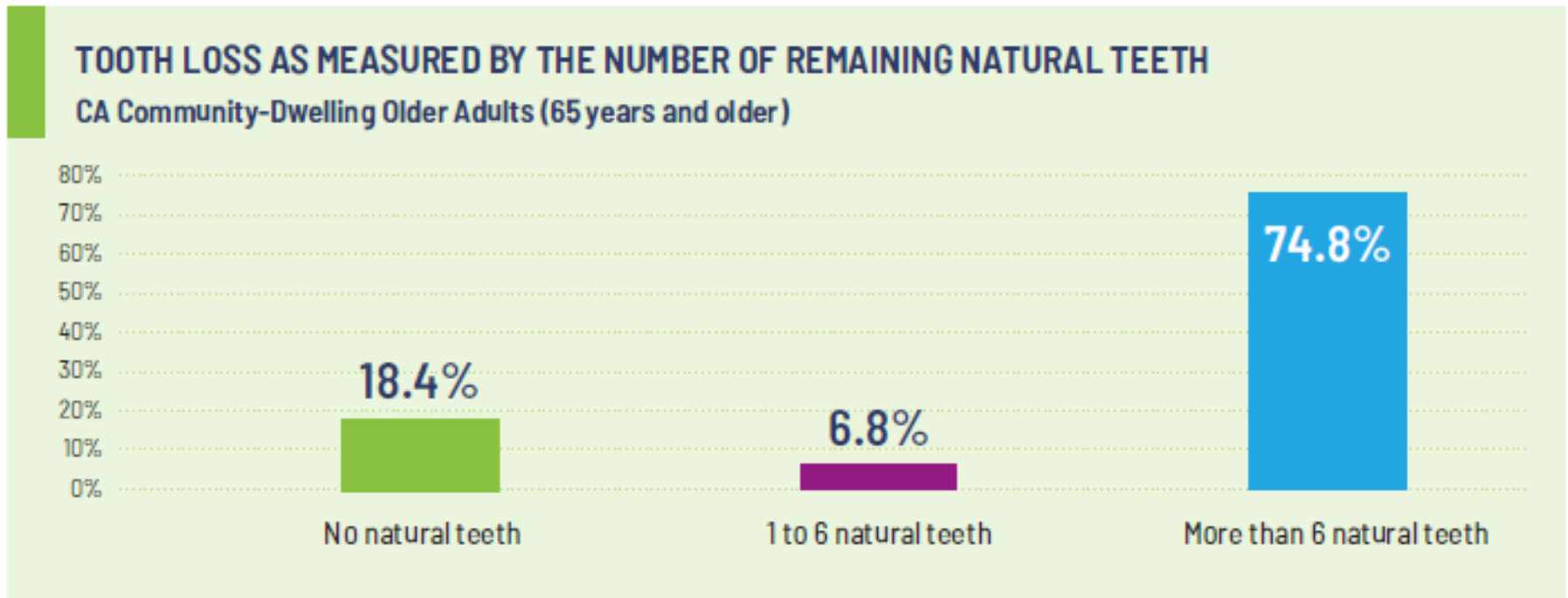
Key Finding # 2: Skilled Nursing Residents

- More than one in three older adults in California's skilled nursing facilities have lost all their teeth



Key Finding # 2: Community-Dwelling

- Eighteen percent (18%) of the community dwelling older adults screened, have lost all their natural teeth, most of them due to tooth decay.



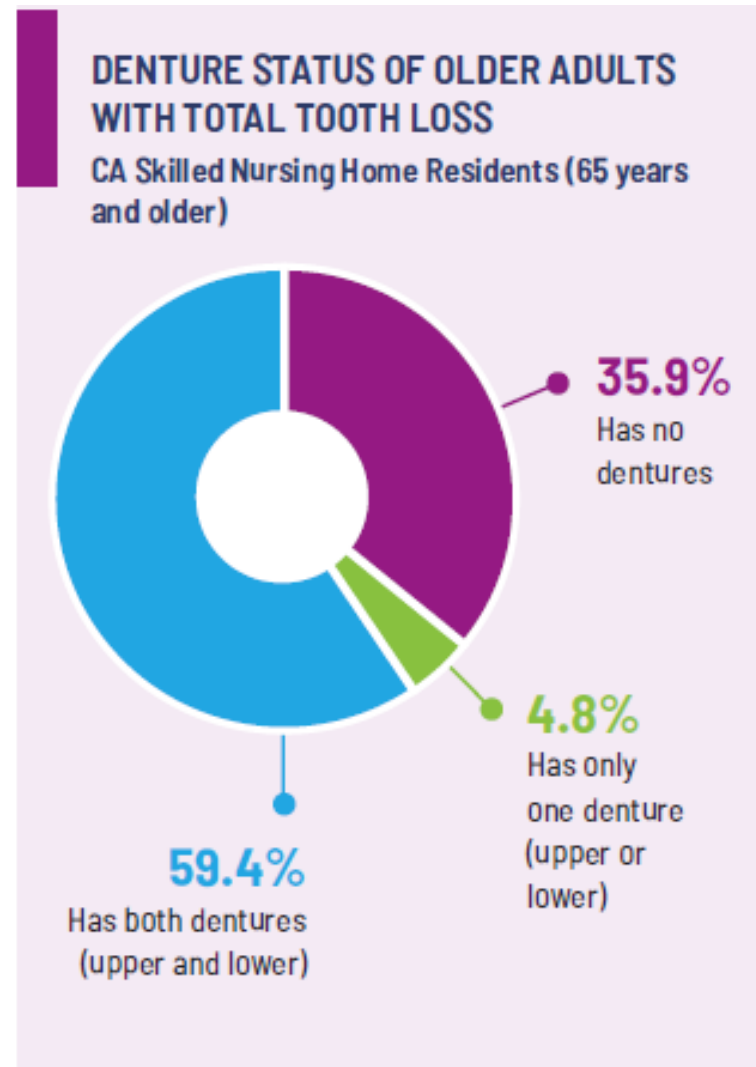
KEY FINDING # 3

Many older adults in California suffer from inability to chew due to poor contact between teeth.



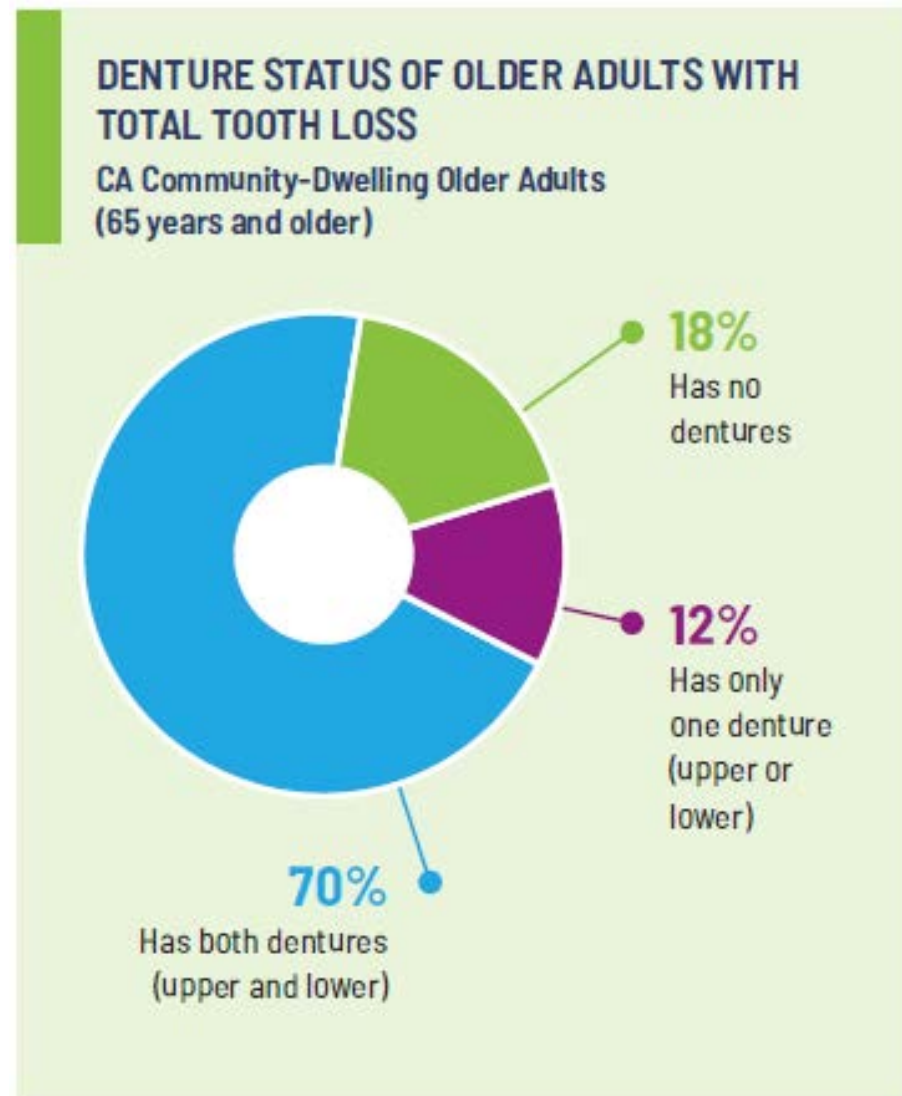
Key Finding # 3: Skilled Nursing Residents

- Nearly 40% of SNF residents cannot chew because they do not have a functional contact between their upper and lower back teeth on either side of their mouth.
- Thirty-six percent (36%) of the older adults with total tooth loss did not have any dentures



Key Finding # 3: Community-Dwelling

- Nearly 18% of the community-dwelling older adults cannot chew due to lack of a functional contact between their upper and lower back teeth
- Eighteen percent (18%) of the older adults with total tooth loss did not have any dentures



KEY FINDING # 4

Majority of older adults need treatment for tooth decay and/ or gum diseases.



Key Finding # 4: Skilled Nursing Residents

- More than one in three older adults need gum (gingival or periodontal) treatment immediately.

OLDER ADULTS WHO NEED EARLY OR IMMEDIATE DENTAL TREATMENT AND PERIODONTAL CARE CA Skilled Nursing Home Residents (65 years and older)



Key Finding # 4: Skilled Nursing Residents

- Nearly one out of three (27%) older adult needs treatment for a decayed tooth immediately or within 2 to 4 weeks.

NEED FOR EARLY OR IMMEDIATE DENTAL TREATMENT FOR TOOTH DECAY (EXCLUDING NEED FOR PERIODONTAL OR GUM CARE) CA Skilled Nursing Home Residents (65 years and older)



Key Finding # 4: Community-Dwelling

- Forty-six percent (46%) of older adults screened, need treatment for tooth decay and or periodontal treatment

PERCENT OF OLDER ADULTS WHO NEEDED EARLY OR IMMEDIATE DENTAL TREATMENT AND PERIODONTAL CARE CA Community-Dwelling Older Adults (65 years and older)



Key Finding # 4: Community-Dwelling

- One out of three (32.7%) older adult needs treatment for a decayed tooth immediately or within 2 to 4 weeks

NEED FOR EARLY OR IMMEDIATE DENTAL TREATMENT FOR TOOTH DECAY (EXCLUDING NEED FOR PERIODONTAL OR GUM CARE) CA Community-Dwelling Older Adults (65 years and older)



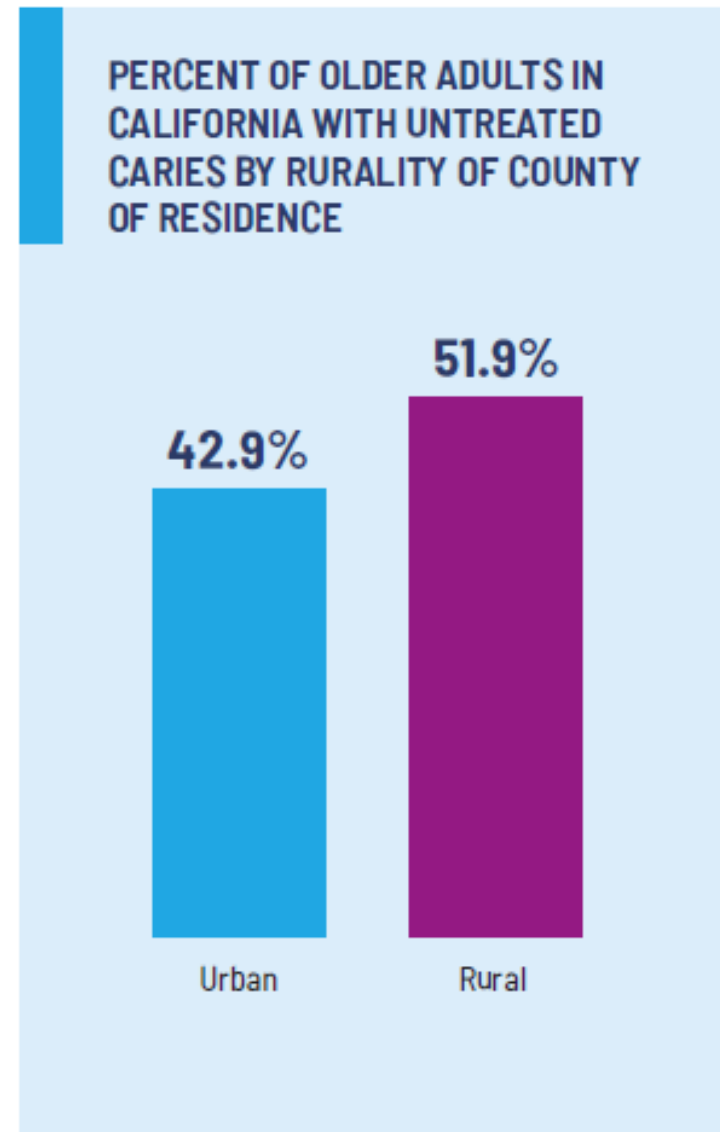
KEY FINDING # 5

Older adults residing in rural areas are worse off than their urban counterparts



Key Finding # 3: Community-Dwelling

- Older adults residing in nursing homes located in rural counties are nearly 10% more likely to have untreated tooth decay than their urban counterparts.
- Older adults living in rural counties who have lost all their natural teeth are twice as likely to lack any dentures as compared to their urban counterparts.



Facility Survey Findings

- Facility surveys have provided further insights
 - ~ Recognize extreme need for better oral hygiene but overburdened
 - ~ “Prior years of neglect that is too expensive to fix now”
 - ~ Top challenges noted: Insurance - pre-authorizations, cost, resident non-compliance and need for transportation
 - ~ Better in-service trainings
 - ~ “RDH, APs are a tremendous help but we are lately facing challenges on that end as well.”



Identified needs and barriers

- Ability to pay, insurance
- Awareness of the importance of good oral health to healthy aging
- Dentists with specialized geriatric training
- Accessibility of services, transportation
- Workforce that older adults can rely on or trust
- Workforce shortage
- Preventive and regular dental care
- Treatment services, extractions and dentures – services beyond basic exams



CONCLUSIONS



RECOMMENDATIONS



Recommendations

1

Break down healthcare silos to adopt an integrated care approach to reduce disease burden

2

Adopt and expand the use of innovative practices in oral health to address the needs of older adults

3

Eliminate barriers to care

4

Include older adults in pilot dental programs and oral health initiatives aimed at healthy aging

5

Improve California's dental workforce capacity to meet oral health needs of older adults



QUESTIONS?

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