

# DENTAL COVERAGE

## for Medicaid Expansion Beneficiaries

### DANGERS OF POOR ORAL HEALTH



Tooth Loss



Gum Disease



Diabetes



Mouth Cancer



Stroke  
Dementia



Bad Breath



Respiratory  
Infections



Heart Disease

Evidence connects healthy mouths with a healthy body, and insufficient dental coverage can negatively affect overall health.

Over  
**34,000**

North Dakotans rely on Medicaid Expansion for their health care coverage. Today, they have NO dental coverage.



Individuals who report dental care affordability concerns miss more hours of work for unplanned dental care.



More than half of Indigenous adults reported no dental visit in the past five or more years.



Nearly 1 in 3 adults who are not Indigenous reported no dental visit in the past five or more years.

**CHAD supports legislation to extend adult dental benefits to ALL North Dakota Medicaid recipients, including individuals covered by Medicaid Expansion.**

Women who had their teeth cleaned during their most recent pregnancy:

**53%**  
White

**28%**  
Hispanic

**26%**  
American Indian

**25%**  
Other



### MISSION OF MERCY: A PICTURE OF UNMET NEED

**778**

North Dakotans received care at the Mission of Mercy event in Bismarck in October 2024. Hundreds lined up (some the night before) to receive free care from volunteer dentists and hygienists.

**66.9%**

had "no insurance" and couldn't afford dental care

**40%**

drove over an hour to attend

**40%**

reported having felt dental pain



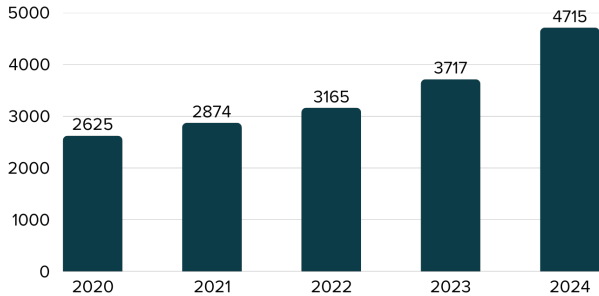
Community HealthCare Association of the Dakotas

# THE HIDDEN COSTS OF NOT COVERING PREVENTATIVE DENTAL CARE

Lack of coverage causes many to delay care until there is a problem – leading to much costlier health risks and treatments.

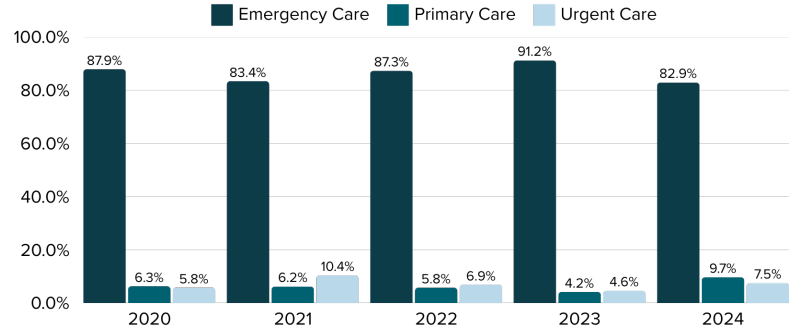
## Number of Tooth Pain Events by Year

North Dakota (2020-2024)

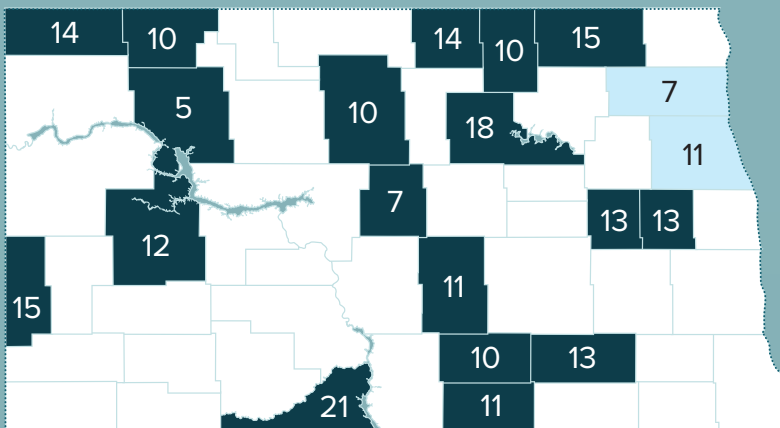


## Types of Visits Associated with Tooth Pain Events

North Dakota (2020-2024)



# UNCOMPENSATED CARE HINDERS DENTAL WORKFORCE GROWTH



**31%**

of dentists report accepting any and all Medicaid patients.

**44%**

of the need for dental providers is being met.

**69**

dental care health practitioner shortage areas (HPSAs) designated in the state, with a service area of **153,291** people

- Geographic dental health professional shortage area
- Low-income population health professional shortage area

In 2023, Community Health Centers provided over

**25,600 dental visits**

in North Dakota, regardless of insurance status or ability to pay.



“Increasing the number of insured patients adds resources to and strengthens the entire dental system. More covered patients would improve health centers’ ability to pay competitive wages and bring high-quality dentists to our rural communities.”

**SHELLY TEN NAPEL**  
CEO, COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE  
ASSOCIATION OF THE DAKOTAS

The financial strain of uncompensated dental care for Medicaid Expansion patients at health centers makes it even more difficult to grow their dental programs and workforce. Having more patients with coverage means that more care can be reimbursed, allowing health centers to invest in workforce growth and enhance access.