

Oral Health Equity Preamble February 2022

As members of the Council on Advocacy for Access and Prevention, we call representatives of the dental community to acknowledge an equitable vision for oral health for all people.

Oral health is an essential component of overall health. Every individual should enjoy a basic level of oral health that allows each to eat, work, learn and live in a state of wellness that precludes any semblance of oral pain or dysfunction.

All dental safety net settings, whether public, private or a collaboration of both, should offer comprehensive oral health care that meets the needs of the individuals and communities in which they are found. Access to dental care should be appropriately considered, designed, and funded to address the oral health needs of the community and be sufficiently scaled in size to have maximum impact.

Oral Health is an essential part of any health care program and should be a consideration for the ongoing health and well-being of every patient seen by health care professionals at every level.

Efforts to educate the public, legislators, the media and educational communities should result in a realization of the importance of oral health and appreciation of those who provide oral health preventative care and treatment services. Health care programs should be funded sufficiently to provide adequate reimbursement commensurate with practice viability.

Charity and volunteerism generously serve short term needs as they reduce financial / transportation barriers to accessing dental care. We can continue to improve these access points by development of more permanent solutions to optimal quality oral health care for all.

The American Dental Association calls upon all aspects of the oral health community, patients, advocates, providers and funders, to find *common ground* in devising impactful and sustainable oral health equity awareness and implementation strategies. Such collaboration will promote disease prevention; reduce barriers to health care, advocate for reasonable and adequate fiscal support of programs addressing the oral health needs of underserved populations, and encourage effective and efficient efforts to integrate oral health into overall health.