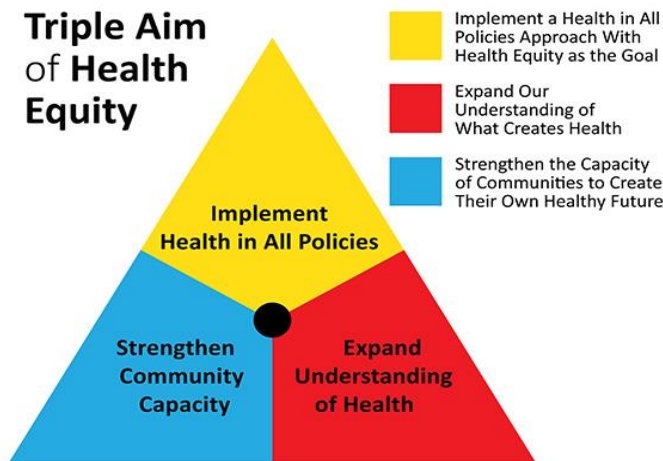


Definition: the ADA recognizes Health Equity as optimal health for all people.

Oral health is an essential component of overall health, and everyone should enjoy a basic level of oral health that allows them to eat, work, learn and live in a state of wellness. But oral health is an often neglected part of health care, and many Americans lack access to even basic dental services. People who are low-income, a member of a racial or ethnic minority, living in a rural or underserved area, medically fragile, elderly or disabled may experience difficulties accessing oral care.

The American Dental Association defines Health Equity as optimal health for all people, and strives to address the inequities that exist in oral health care through member education, public awareness, legislative awareness, and organizational engagement.



This policy statement reflects the values recognized by ADA members within the Preamble approved by the [Council on Advocacy for Access and Prevention](#):

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.



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.

Overall Goal of Oral Health Equity: Reduction of Oral Health Disparities

Action Plan Steps and Objectives

1. Improve Data Collection and Research

Objectives

- Expand efforts for grants at the population level to expand access
- Collaborate with Association for State and Territorial Dental Directors for sealant placement and preventive services surveillance
- Work with state insurance programs to collect utilization metrics based on race and ethnicity

2. Advocate to positively impact Social Determinants of Health

Objectives

- Increase the number of Community Dental Health Coordinators
- Collaborate with other organizations to expand access and health literacy
- Advocate for Community Water Fluoridation and share science based evidence

3. Reinforce the important role of oral health within overall health

Objectives

- Collaborate with American Academy of Pediatricians (AAP)
- Advocate for expanded HPV vaccination and Tobacco / Vaping Cessation
- Support School Based Programs
- Integrate Oral Health into Addiction Medicine Programs

4. Support Cultural Competency and Diversity in Dentistry

- Support Pathways to Dental Careers for Underrepresented Populations
- Offer CE to Improve Dental Team Cultural Knowledge Base

5. Support Equitable Access to Care Programs

- Collaborate with Oral Health Stakeholders to Improve Medicaid Programs



Oral Health Equity Preamble

Council on Advocacy for Access and Prevention

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.

ADA Organizational Strategic Partnerships to Advance Oral Health Equity

Internal

- All Council Members
- ADA Leaders
- American Student Dental Association

External

- American Academy of Pediatrics
- Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors
- American Medical Association
- American Dental Education Association
- American College of Emergency Physicians
- American Association of Women Dentists
- National Network for Oral Health Access
- Hispanic Dental Association
- National Dental Association
- Society for American Indian Dentists
- Medicare / Medicaid State Dental Association (MSDA)

Toolkit Stages and Metrics

- A. Health Equity Action Team Launch Party and Toolkit Kickoff! Smile Con October 2022
- B. Staff Education: 4th Quarter 2022 - 2023



ADA 4 ALL Webinars and IntraNet

- | | |
|--|--|
| C. ADA Leader Education
4 th Quarter 2022 – 2023 | Board of Trustees, Councils, PEs
State Associations
Webinars, Journal Articles, and Audiograms |
| D. ADA Member Education | Webinars and Audiograms |

Making the Case for Health Equity in Your Community:

Recent Survey Results August 2022:

- Dentists want to see the ADA demonstrate a commitment to improving the oral health of all patients, not just those with the ability to pay.
- They want the ADA to advocate for the underserved, and to help them to deliver the best possible care for all of their patients.

Public Activism and Perception Counts:

- Dentists can “do well” and “do good” - they can grow professionally within any practice setting while working to improve the oral health of the public
- Working with local stakeholders and non-profit community groups to support oral health treatment grows the Health Equity movement draws the attention of legislators and policy makers

Create a “Socially Connected” Practice Mindset:

- Identify stakeholders who can help you address local Social Determinants of Health which construct barriers to dental care
- Work with your local society to map pathways to reach stakeholders and patient influencers to promote oral health access points
- Collaborate with new mom groups, local media and school health professionals to provide home care supplies to promote disease prevention
- Join in a “rounding” visit to local community clinics / FQHCs to determine their pressure points which may block access
- Thank your specialist dental society members – such as oral surgeons and pediatric dentists -- at least once per year for being the “point people” in moving Health Equity forward

These strategies will create a culture of positive community change which will help you develop a “social script” to promote Health Equity and disease prevention in your community.

Join the Health Equity Action Team (HEAT)

A. Participate in the Compassion Campaign

- Link to one medical provider Hospital ED or OB-GYN and use the power of positive psychology to promote oral health
- Host a Give Kids A Smile / Baby Day event in your office to increase staff satisfaction and enable you to be the catalyst for disease prevention
- Engage your dental team in Cultural Competence training to improve access in your community to create a more adaptive and resilient workforce
- Review your patient health history and office materials through a Health Literacy / Health Equity lens

B. Share Your Stories With Us!

- Remember that all your patients will benefit when you help the underserved either directly or indirectly – and you will too!
- Better patient outcomes will foster stronger collaborative relationships between you and your community stakeholders, creating a positive mental climate in your office
- Students in your community will see value in the dental profession and see themselves as part of the dental community
- The American Psychology Association found that workplaces with positive mental psychology have 21% lower turnover than the national average

Share just one story – with photos – to receive your HEAT Pin!

Need Help to “Kick Off” Health Equity in Your Practice?

- Send us a message through our HEAT landing page for supply requests, one pagers, community needs assessment thoughts and more...
- Consult with our [Health Equity Champions Page](#) for more information!



REMEMBER – When you seek to make a positive Health Equity impact in a community’s wellbeing, you become recognized as a valuable member of the community which will increase your “presence” in your area.

This will improve your employee engagement, your overall patient experiences and the brand equity of your practice.