

National Trends in Dental Care Use, Dental Insurance Coverage, and Cost Barriers

September 2024

In this deck

- Updated national trends based on the latest available data as of September 2024:
 - Dental care use – based on Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (MEPS) data
 - Dental insurance status – based on MEPS data
 - Cost barriers to dental care – based on National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) data
- Results available by age group, race/ethnicity, insurance status, and income level
- Detailed Data & Methods:

https://www.ada.org/-/media/project/ada-organization/ada/ada-org/files/resources/research/hpi/national_trends_dental_use_benefits_barriers_methods.pdf

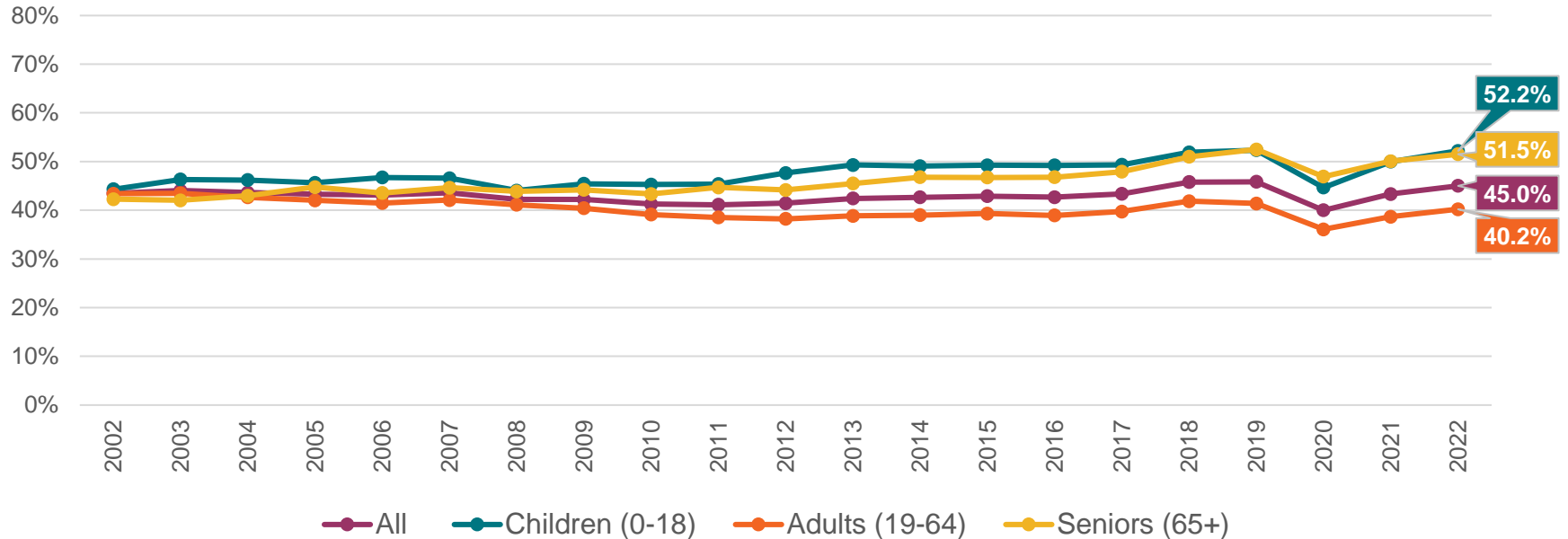
Dental Care Use

Dental Care Use – Latest Data Highlights

- An estimated 45% of the U.S. population visited a dentist in 2022, an uptick from 2021.
 - Note that due to the methodology used (MEPS), this figure should be viewed as a slight underestimate of the true dental care use rate.
 - Alternative data sources are less reliable and prone to large overestimates (e.g., NHIS, NHANES, BRFSS). Hence HPI relies on the MEPS data.
- While 51% of seniors and 52% children visited a dentist in 2022, only 40% of adults ages 19-64 saw a dentist.
- There are disparities in dental care use by race/ethnicity and income. The disparities are generally smallest for children.
- As of 2022, dental care use has largely rebounded to pre-COVID levels, particularly among different age, income, race/ethnicity, and insurance groups.
- In 2022, MEPS added a new Medicare Advantage (MA) dental benefit question. The percentage of seniors with a MA dental benefit that visited a dentist was 55% in 2022. Among seniors with private dental insurance outside of Medicare Advantage, the percent that visited a dentist was 77% in 2022.

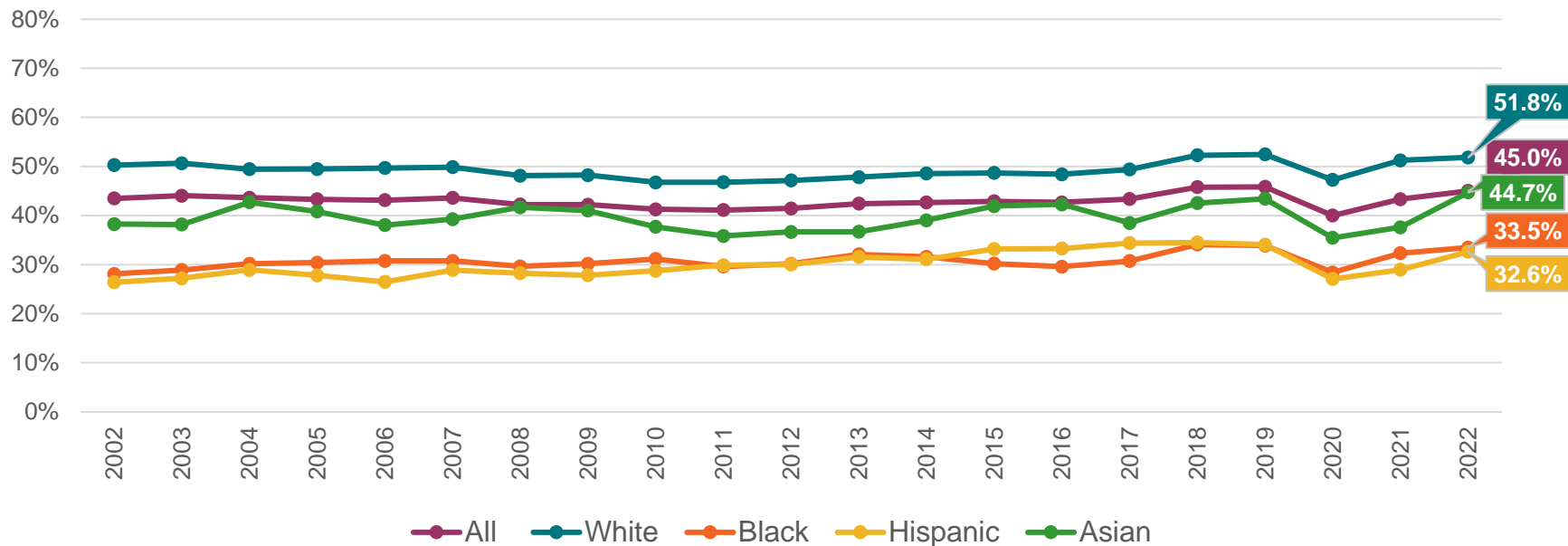
Dental Care Use by Age Group

Percentage with a Dental Visit in the Past Year



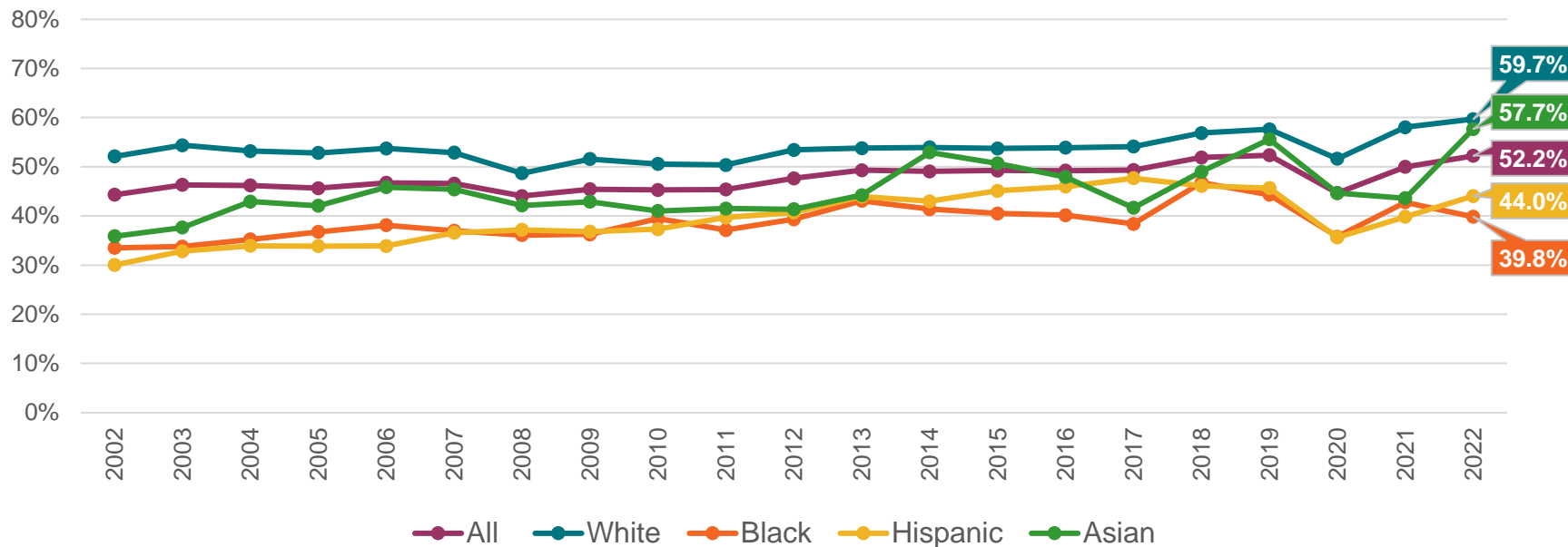
Dental Care Use by Race/Ethnicity

Percentage with a Dental Visit in the Past Year



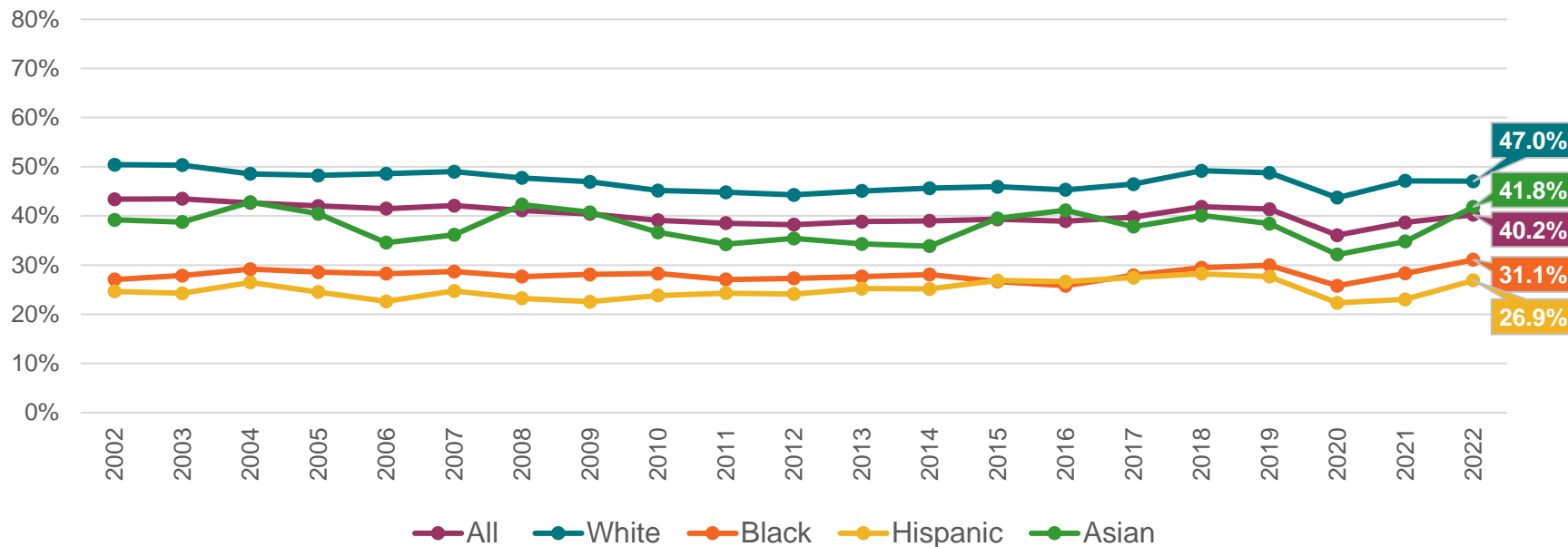
Dental Care Use by Race/Ethnicity and Age

Percentage with a Dental Visit in the Past Year – Children (Ages 0-18)



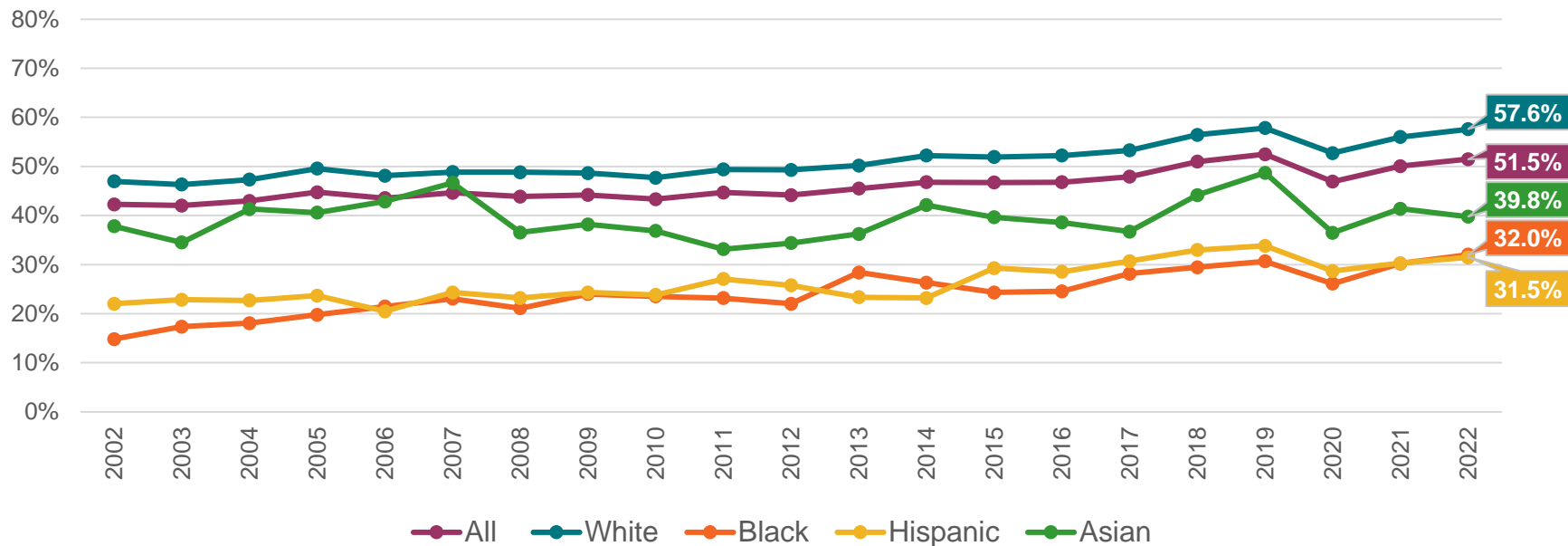
Dental Care Use by Race/Ethnicity and Age

Percentage with a Dental Visit in the Past Year – Adults (Ages 19-64)



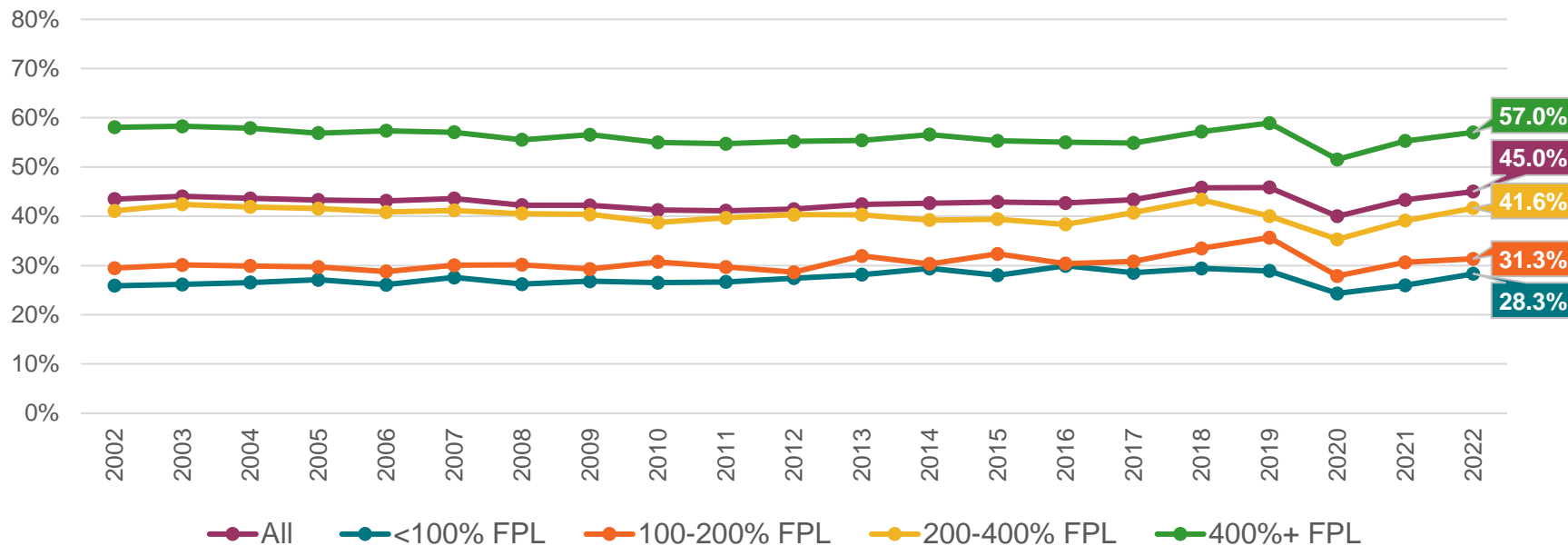
Dental Care Use by Race/Ethnicity and Age

Percentage with a Dental Visit in the Past Year – Seniors (Ages 65+)



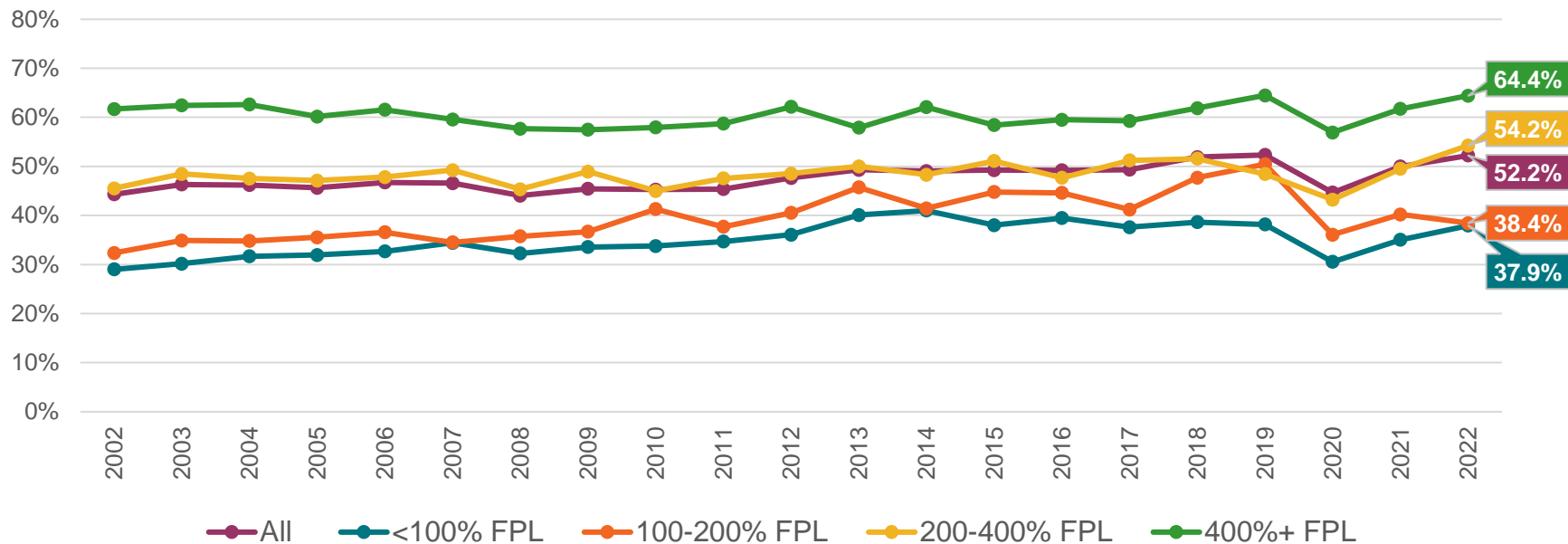
Dental Care Use by Income Level

Percentage with a Dental Visit in the Past Year



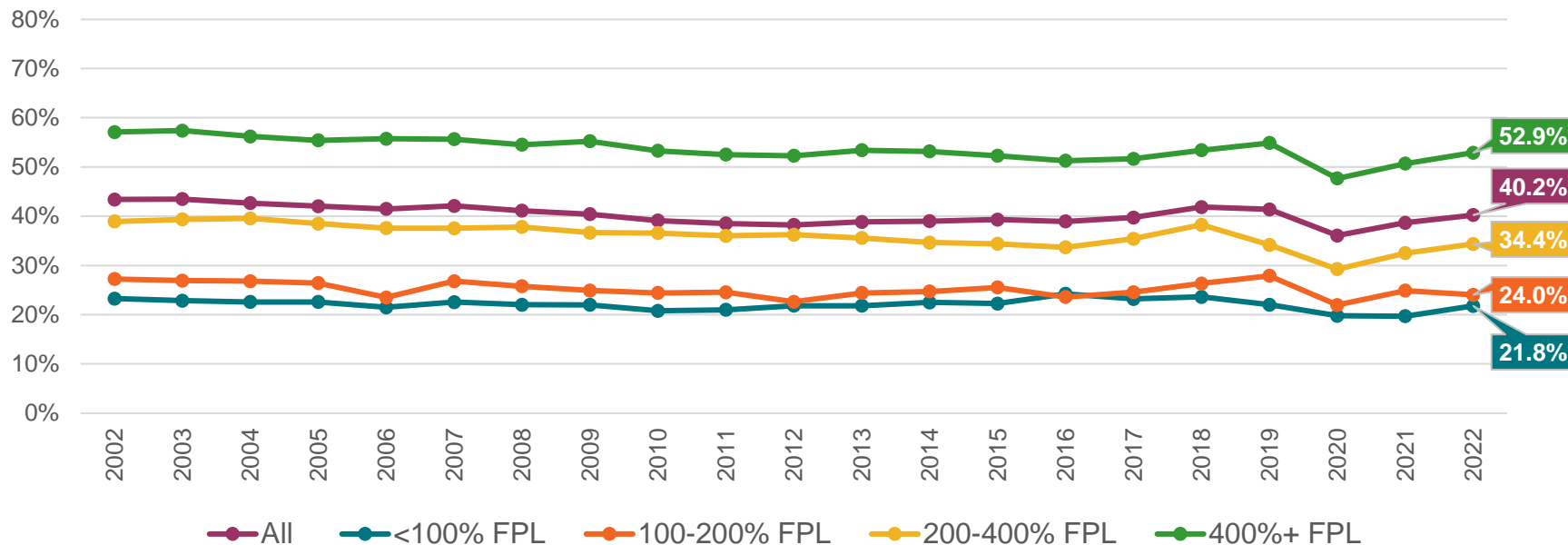
Dental Care Use by Income Level and Age

Percentage with a Dental Visit in the Past Year – Children (0-18)



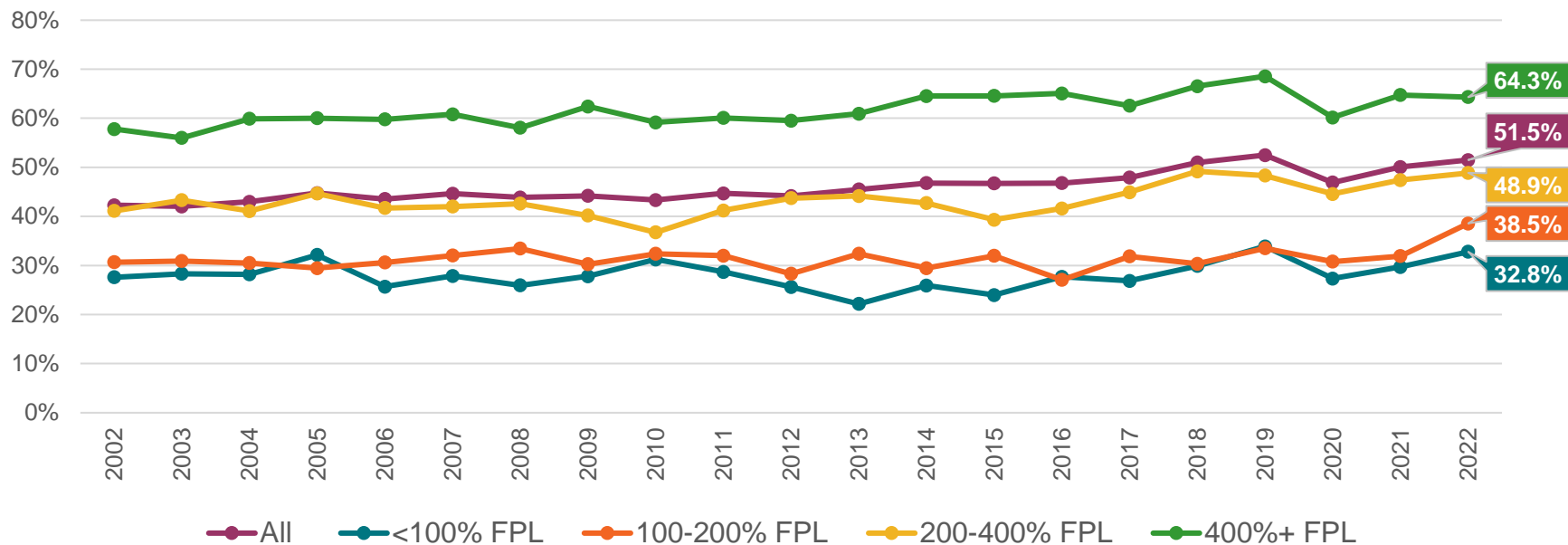
Dental Care Use by Income Level and Age

Percentage with a Dental Visit in the Past Year – Adults (Ages 19-64)



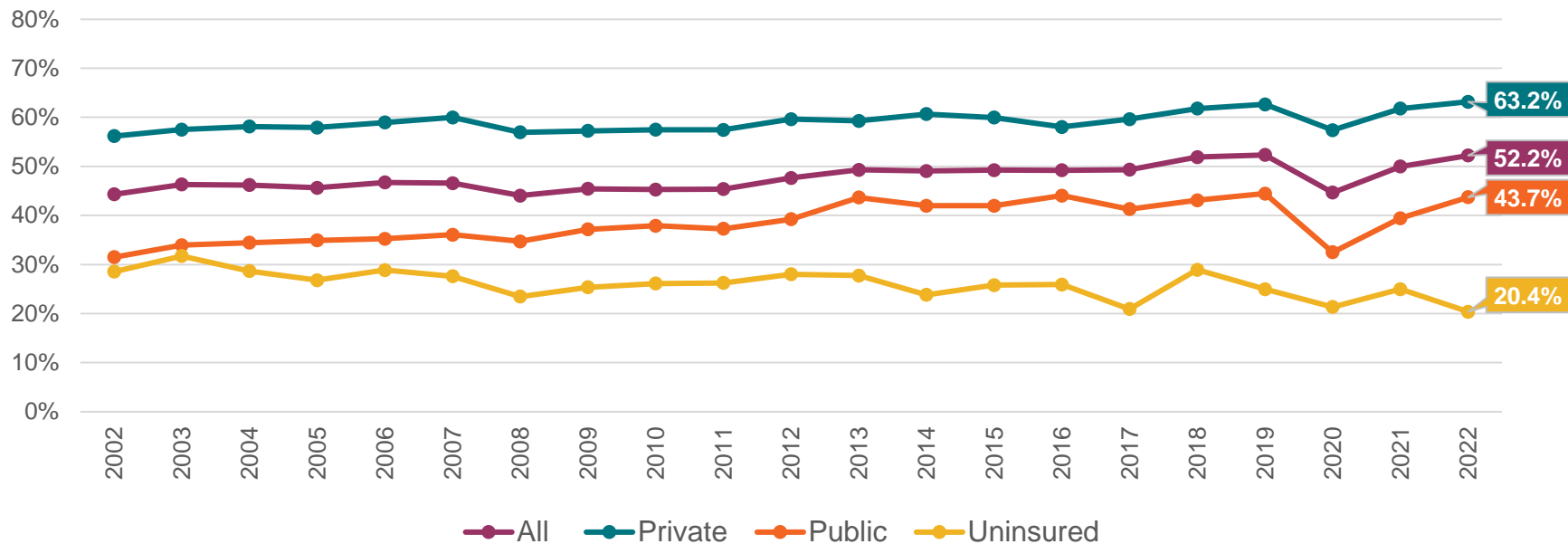
Dental Care Use by Income Level and Age

Percentage with a Dental Visit in the Past Year – Seniors (Ages 65+)



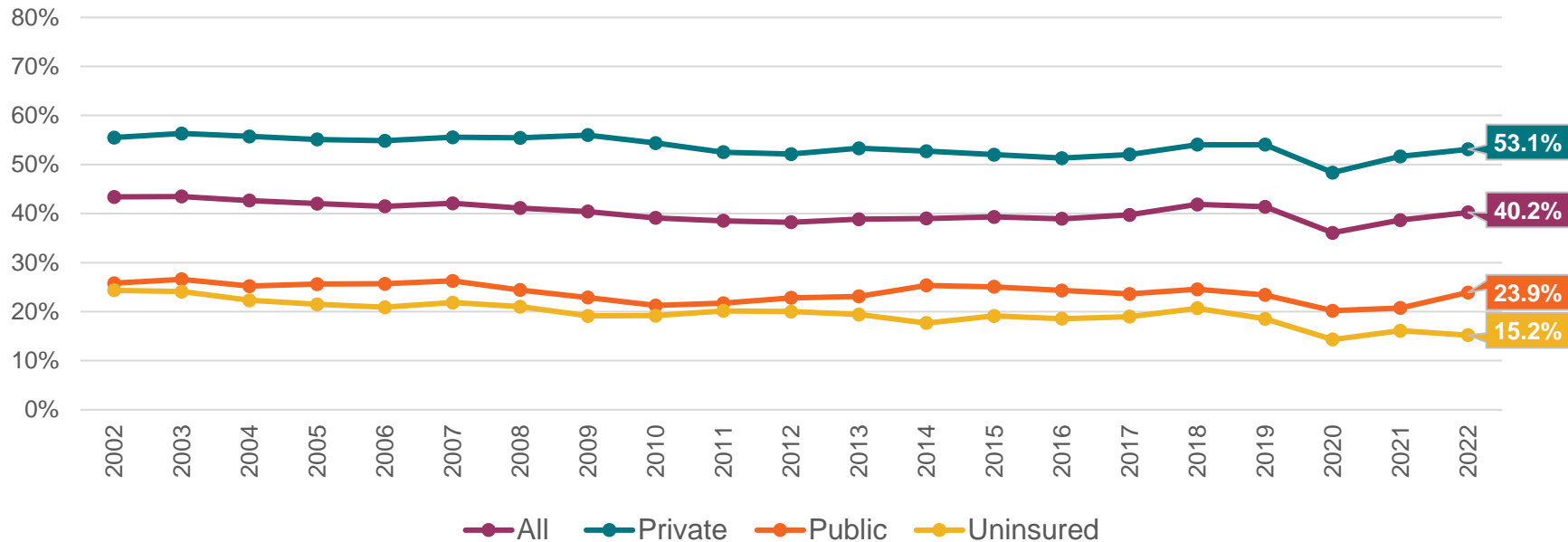
Dental Care Use by Insurance Status and Age

Percentage with a Dental Visit in the Past Year – Children (0-18)



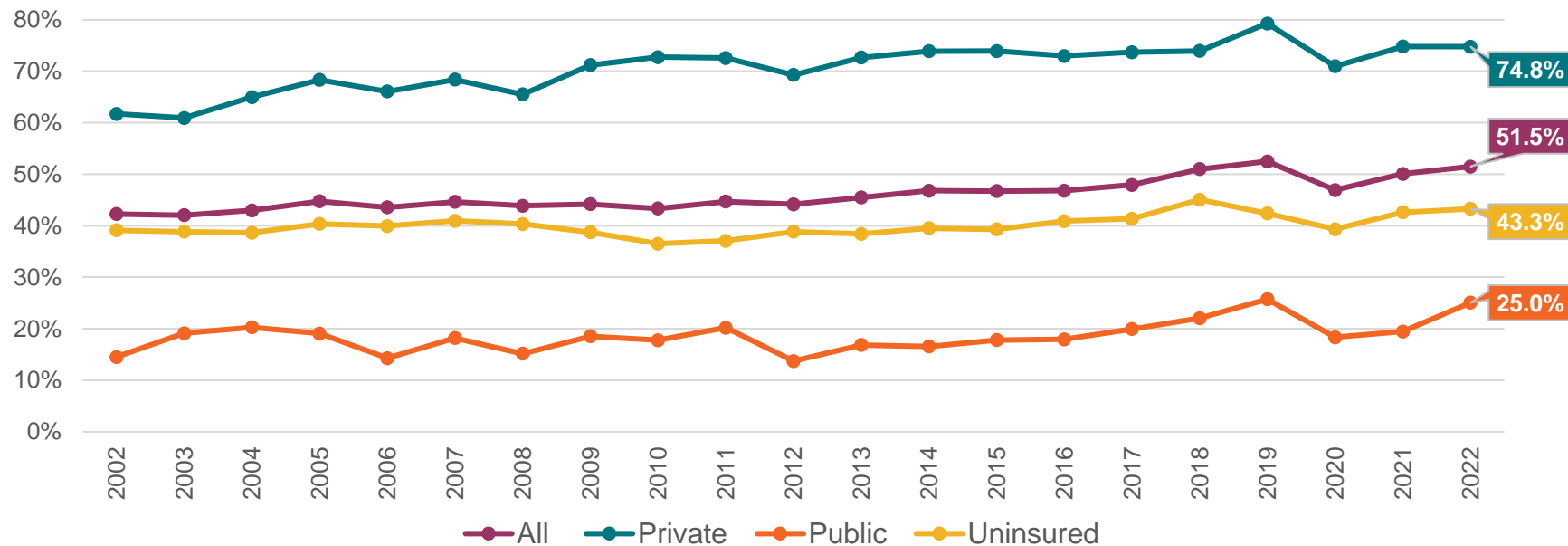
Dental Care Use by Insurance Status and Age

Percentage with a Dental Visit in the Past Year – Adults (Ages 19-64)



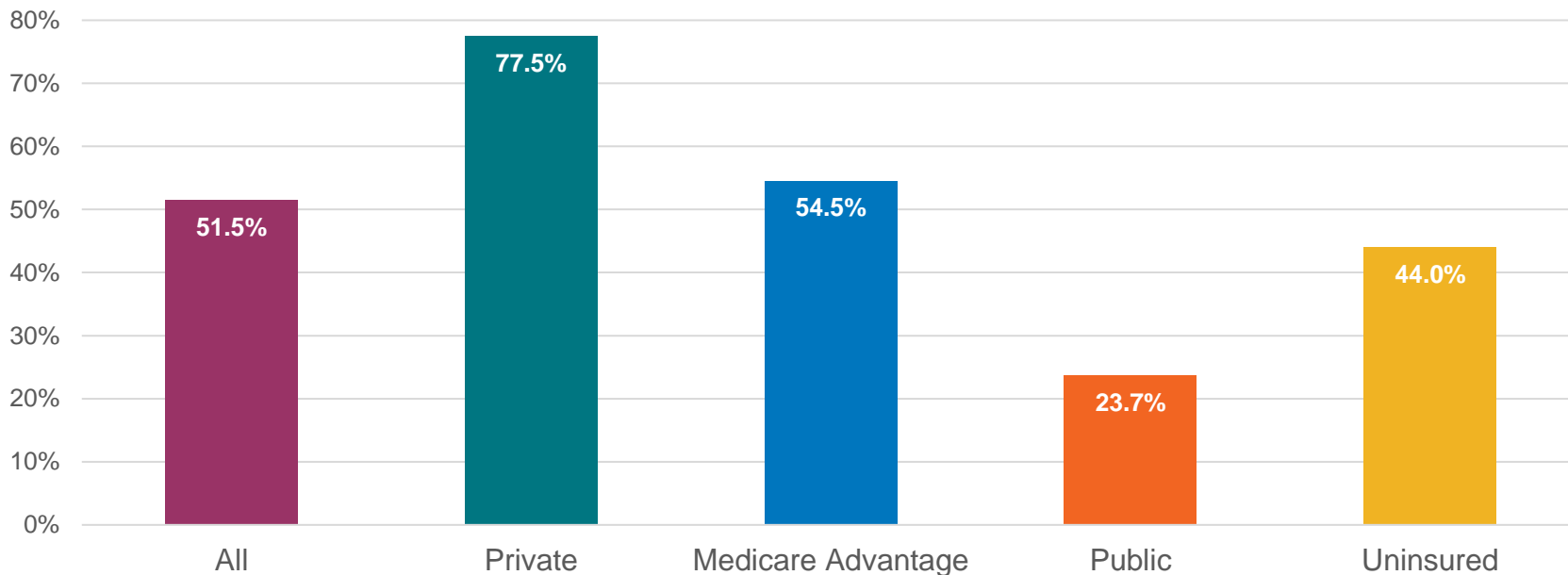
Dental Care Use by Insurance Status and Age

Percentage with a Dental Visit in the Past Year – **Seniors (Ages 65+)**
(Not Accounting for Medicare Advantage Dental Plans)



Dental Care Use by Insurance Status and Age

Percentage with a Dental Visit in the Past Year, 2022
Seniors (Ages 65+) (Accounting for Medicare Advantage Dental Plans)



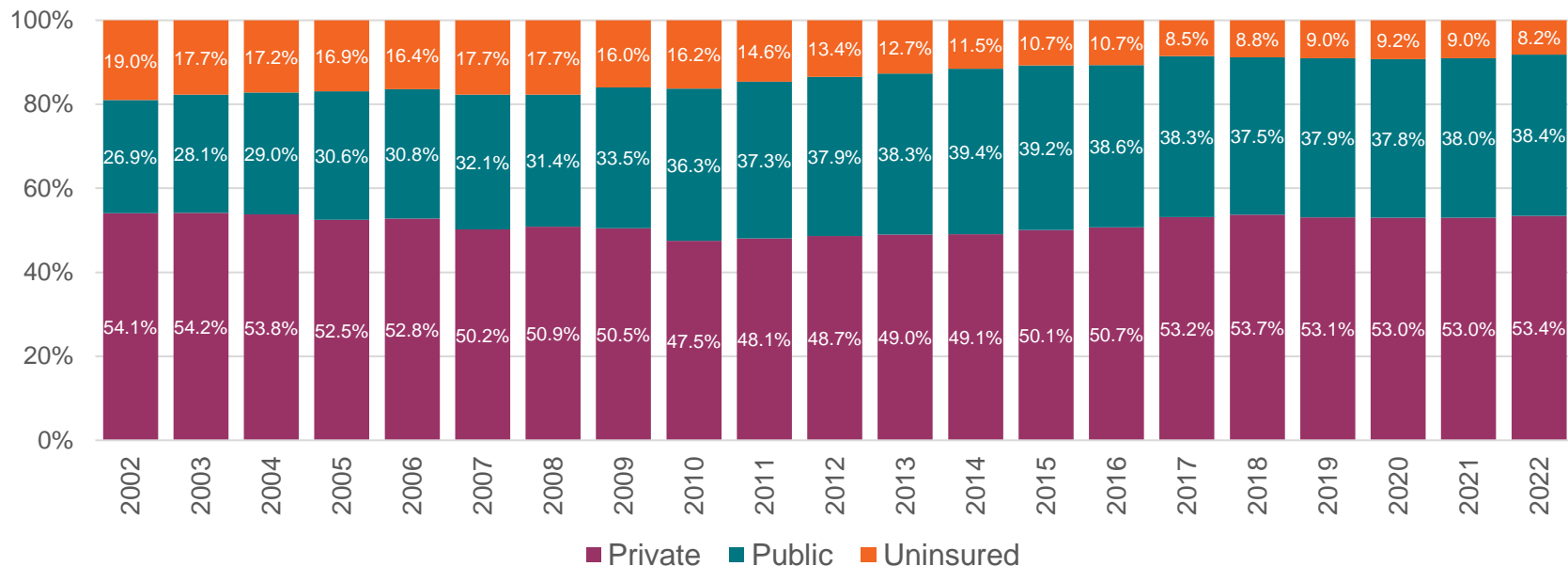
Dental Insurance Status

Dental Insurance Status – Latest Data Highlights

- The percentage of children with no dental insurance decreased to 8% in 2022, which is the lowest recorded rate of children without dental benefits since 2002. The share of children with public dental insurance (i.e., Medicaid and CHIP) was 38% in 2022, slightly higher than in the most recent years.
- Among adults, 62% had private dental insurance in 2022. This has been stable for the past few years and is slightly higher than a decade ago. Because Medicaid programs differ widely when it comes to adult dental benefits coverage, the MEPS data do not allow accurate estimates of the percent of adults with public dental insurance coverage.
- In 2022, MEPS added a new Medicare Advantage (MA) dental benefit question. In 2022, 28% had private dental insurance outside of MA, 24% had a MA dental benefit, 6% had public insurance and 42% were uninsured for any dental benefit.

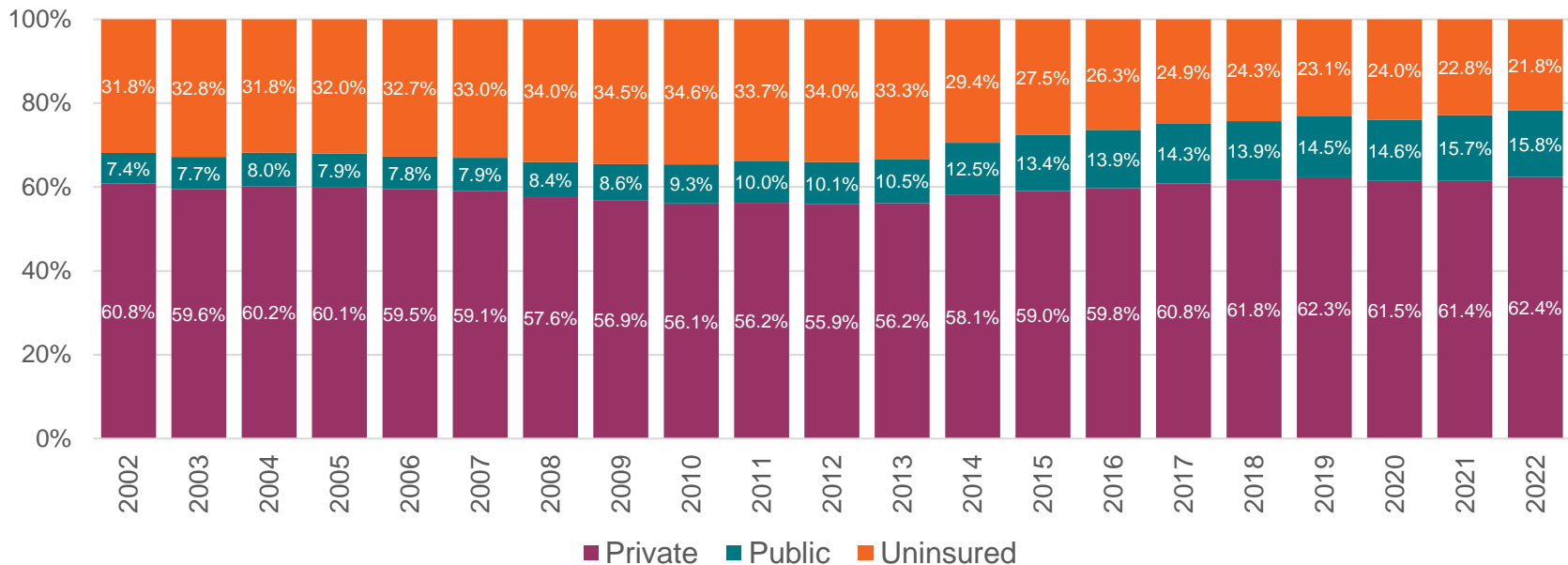
Dental Insurance Status by Age

Percentage by Type of Dental Coverage – Children (Ages 0-18)



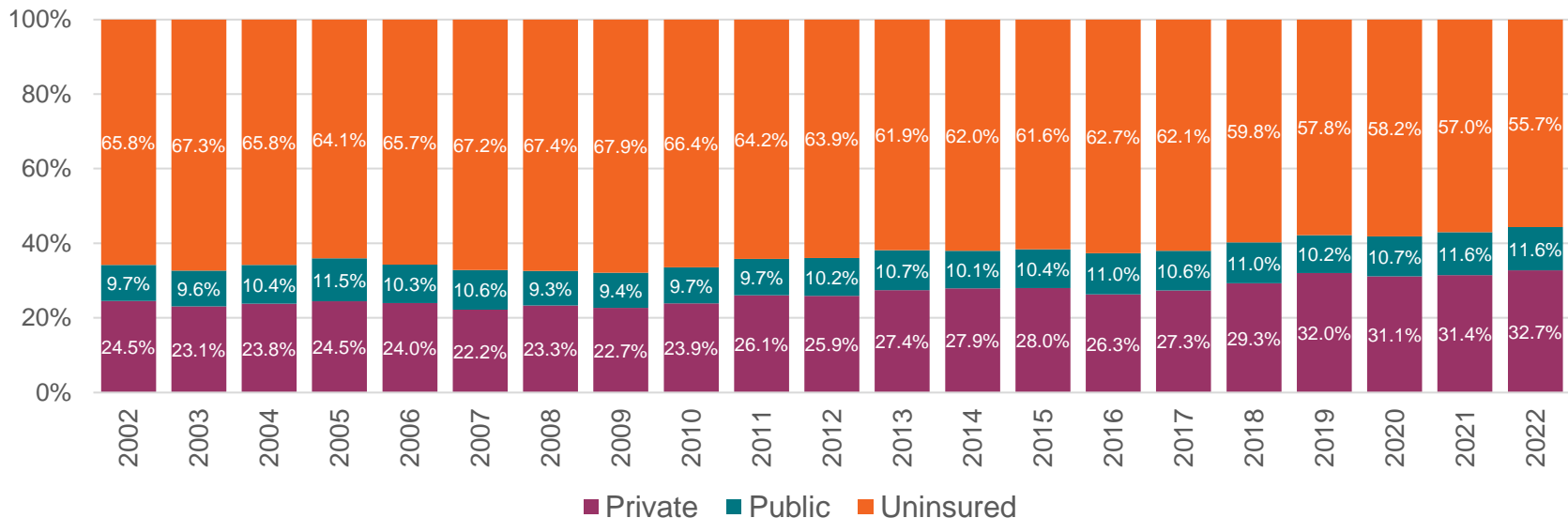
Dental Insurance Status by Age

Percentage by Type of Dental Coverage – Adults (Ages 19-64)



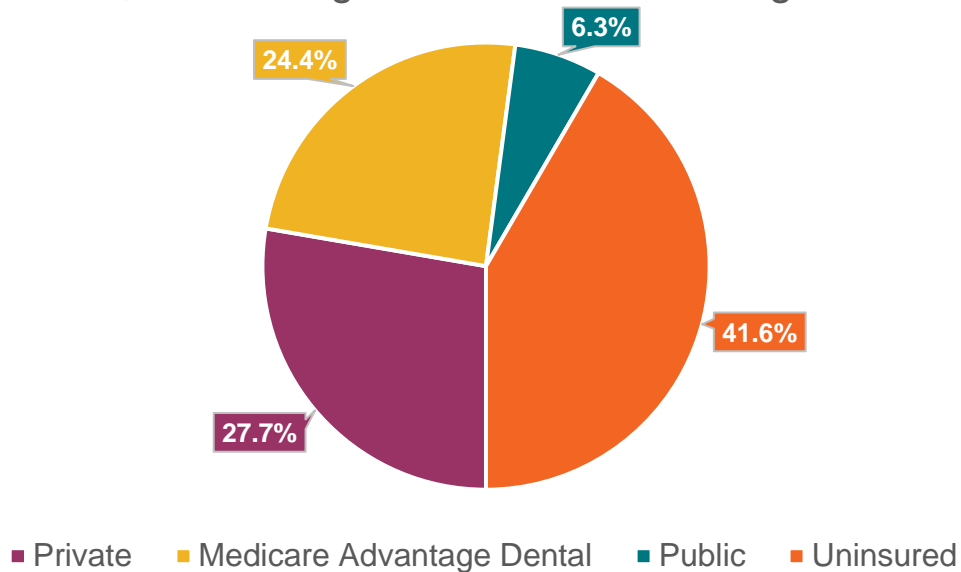
Dental Insurance Status by Age

Percentage by Type of Dental Coverage – **Seniors (Ages 65+)**
(Not Accounting for Medicare Advantage Dental Plans)



Dental Insurance Status by Age

Percentage by Type of Dental Coverage – **Seniors (Ages 65+)**
(New in 2022, Accounting for Medicare Advantage Dental Plans)



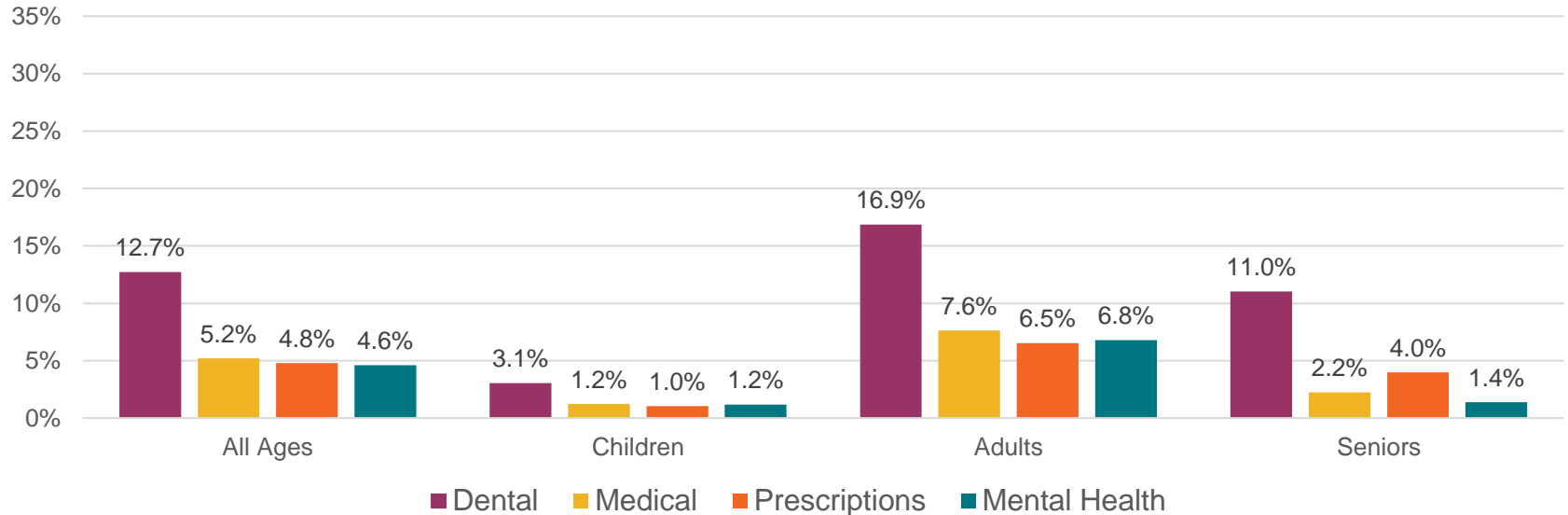
Cost Barriers to Dental Care

Cost Barriers to Care – Latest Data Highlights

- For different age, income, race/ethnicity, and insurance groups, reported cost barriers to dental care did not appreciably change from 2022 to 2023.
- Compared to other types of health care services, cost barriers are most severe for dental care services. In 2023, 13% of the population reported cost barriers to dental care, compared to 4-5% for other health care services.
- Children and seniors report lower levels of cost barriers to dental care than adults.
- Across all age groups, Hispanic people have the highest levels of cost barriers to dental care. However, racial/ethnic disparities in cost barriers to dental care are much narrower among children compared to working-age adults and seniors.
- For all age groups, low-income people have higher cost barriers to dental care. However, the income disparities are narrower among children.
- Across all age groups, those with private dental benefits have the lowest levels of cost barriers to dental care compared to individuals with public dental insurance or no dental insurance.

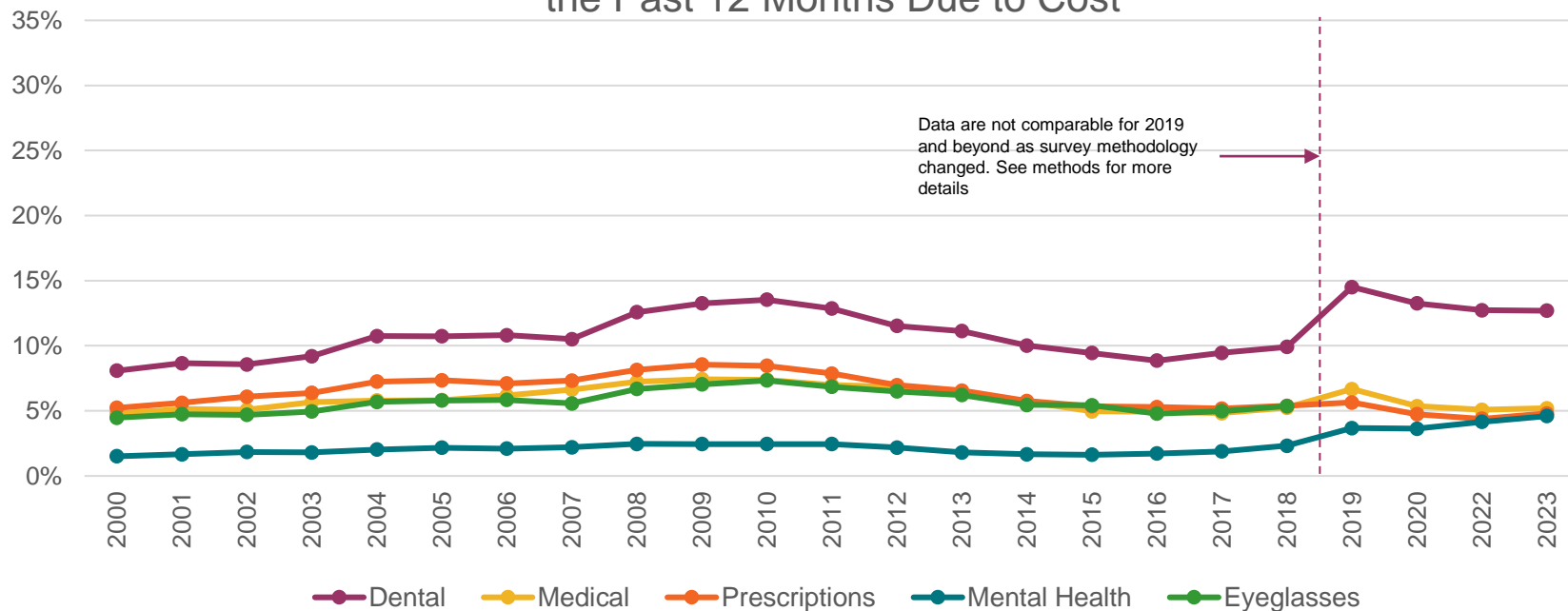
Cost Barriers to Care

Percentage Who Did Not Obtain Needed Health Care Services During the Past 12 Months Due to Cost, 2023



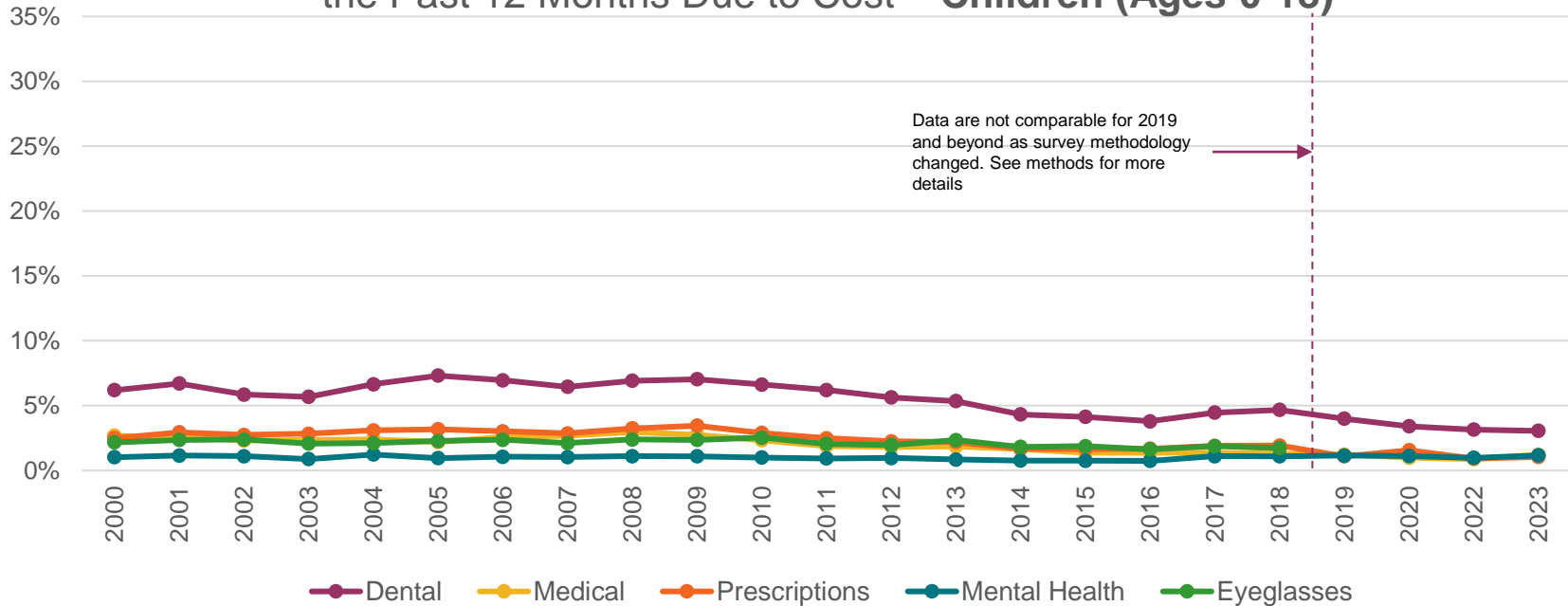
Cost Barriers to Care

Percentage Who Did Not Obtain Needed Health Care Services During the Past 12 Months Due to Cost



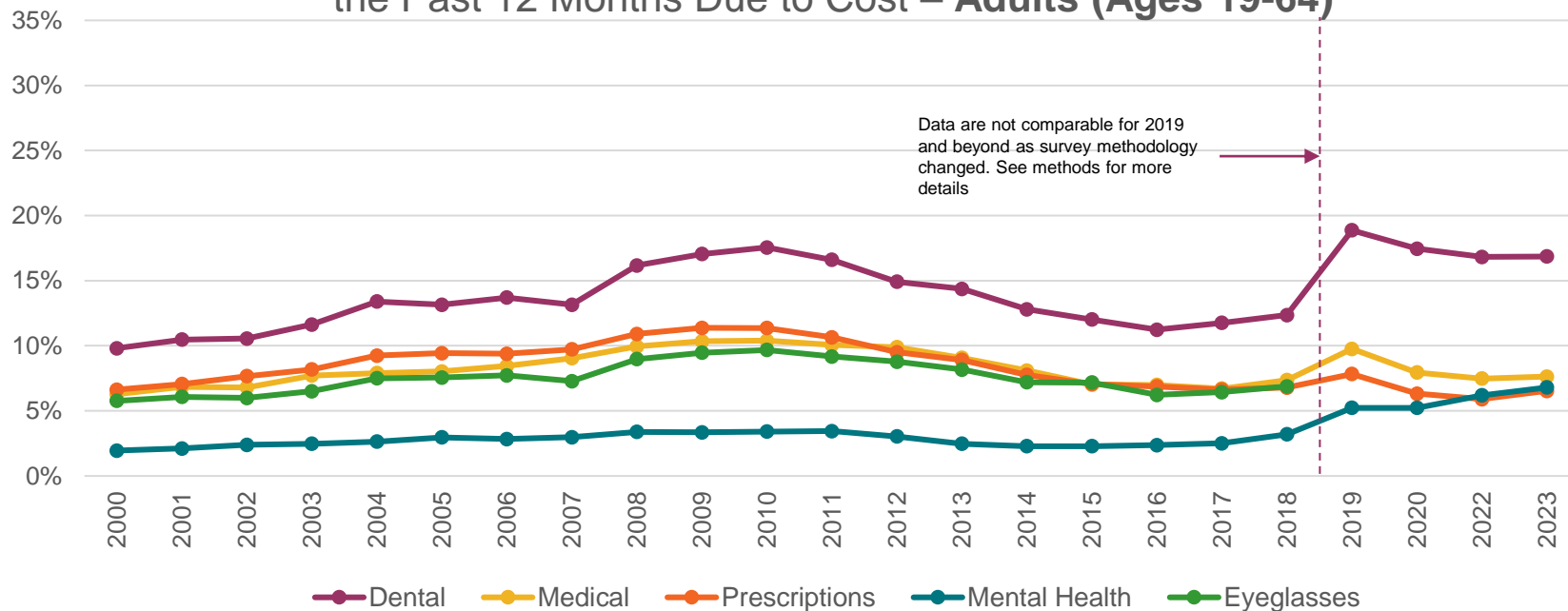
Cost Barriers to Care by Age

Percentage Who Did Not Obtain Needed Health Care Services During the Past 12 Months Due to Cost – Children (Ages 0-18)



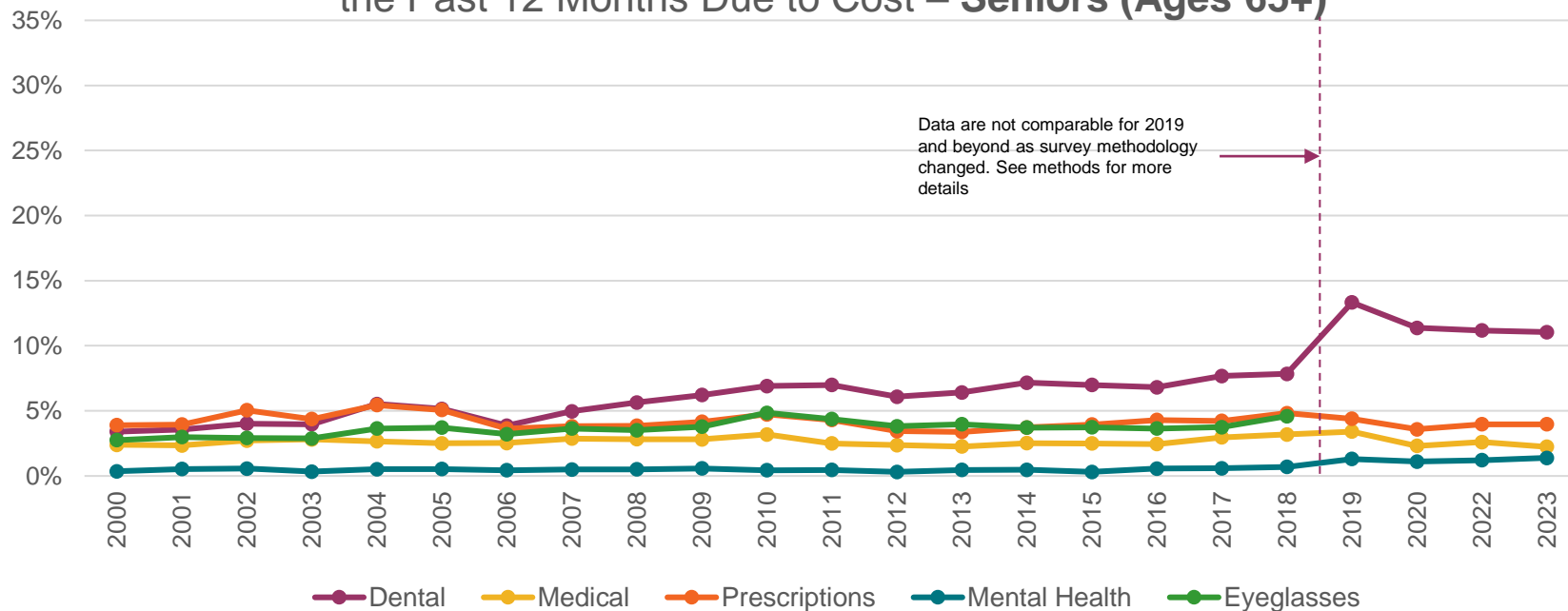
Cost Barriers to Care by Age

Percentage Who Did Not Obtain Needed Health Care Services During the Past 12 Months Due to Cost – **Adults (Ages 19-64)**



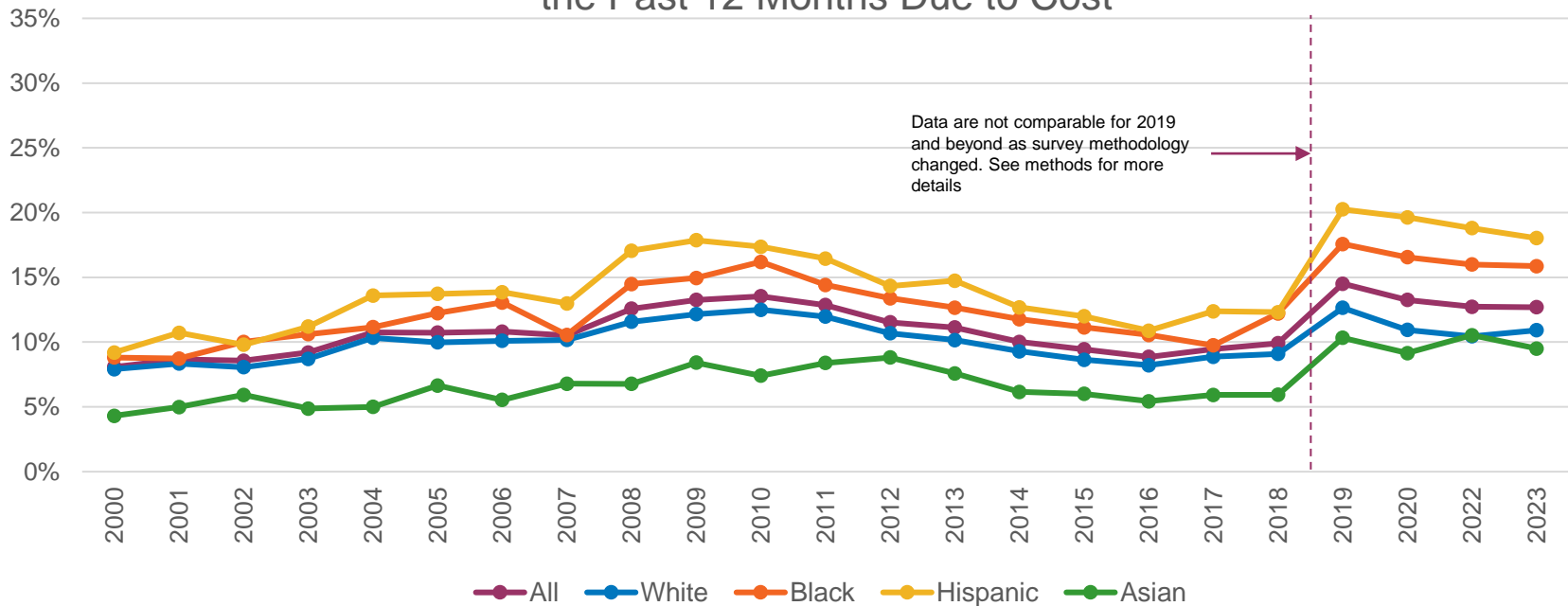
Cost Barriers to Care by Age

Percentage Who Did Not Obtain Needed Health Care Services During the Past 12 Months Due to Cost – **Seniors (Ages 65+)**



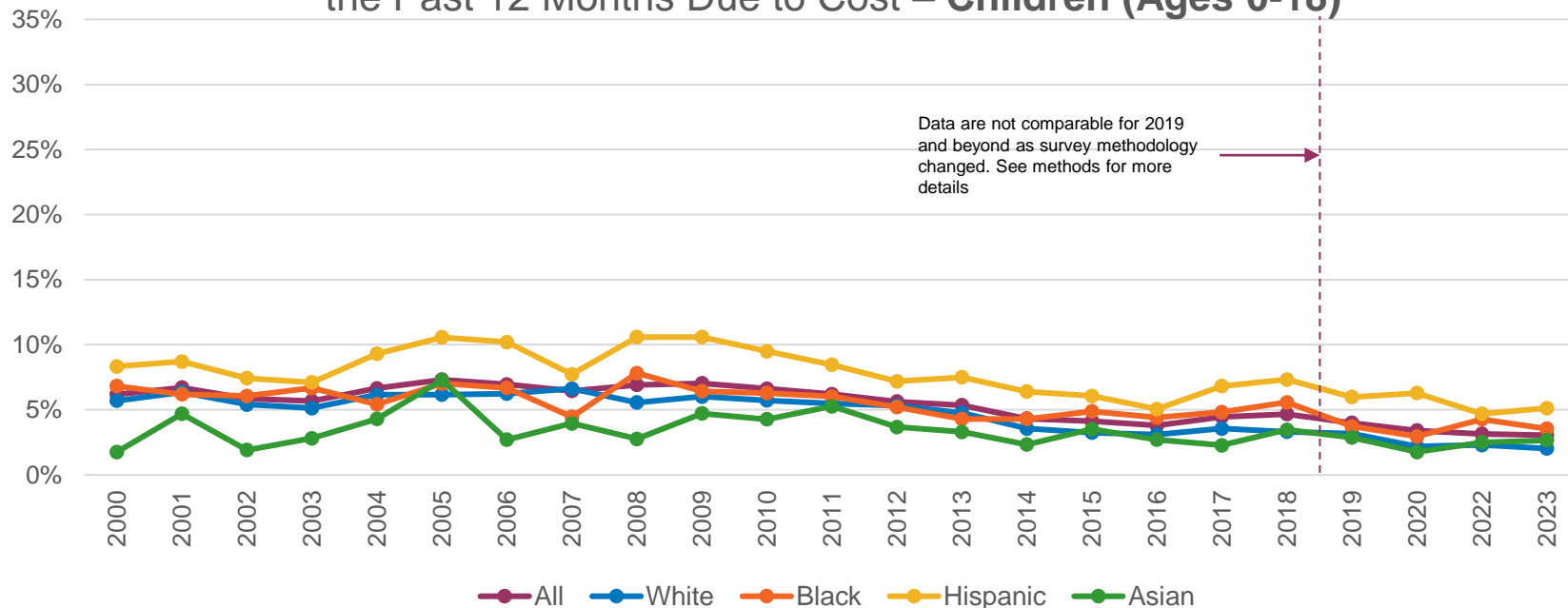
Cost Barriers to Care by Race/Ethnicity

Percentage Who Did Not Obtain Needed Dental Care Services During the Past 12 Months Due to Cost



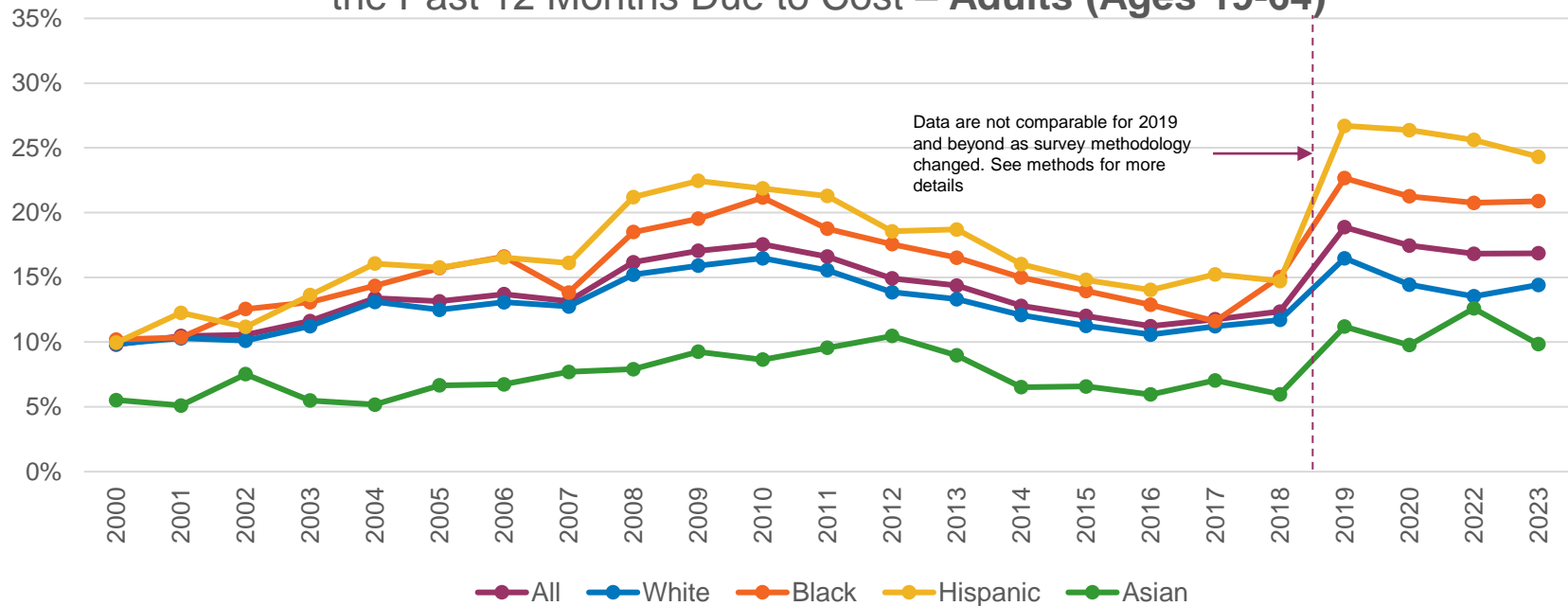
Cost Barriers to Care by Race/Ethnicity & Age

Percentage Who Did Not Obtain Needed Dental Care Services During the Past 12 Months Due to Cost – Children (Ages 0-18)



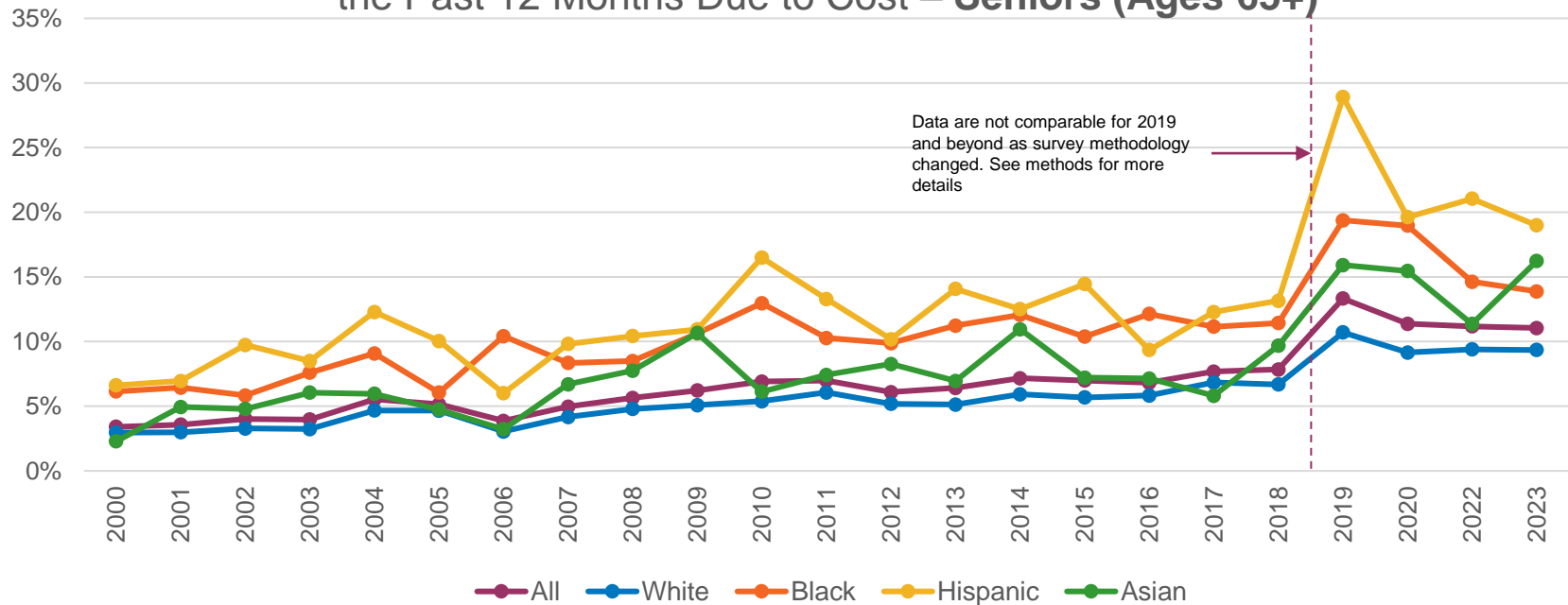
Cost Barriers to Care by Race/Ethnicity & Age

Percentage Who Did Not Obtain Needed Dental Care Services During the Past 12 Months Due to Cost – **Adults (Ages 19-64)**



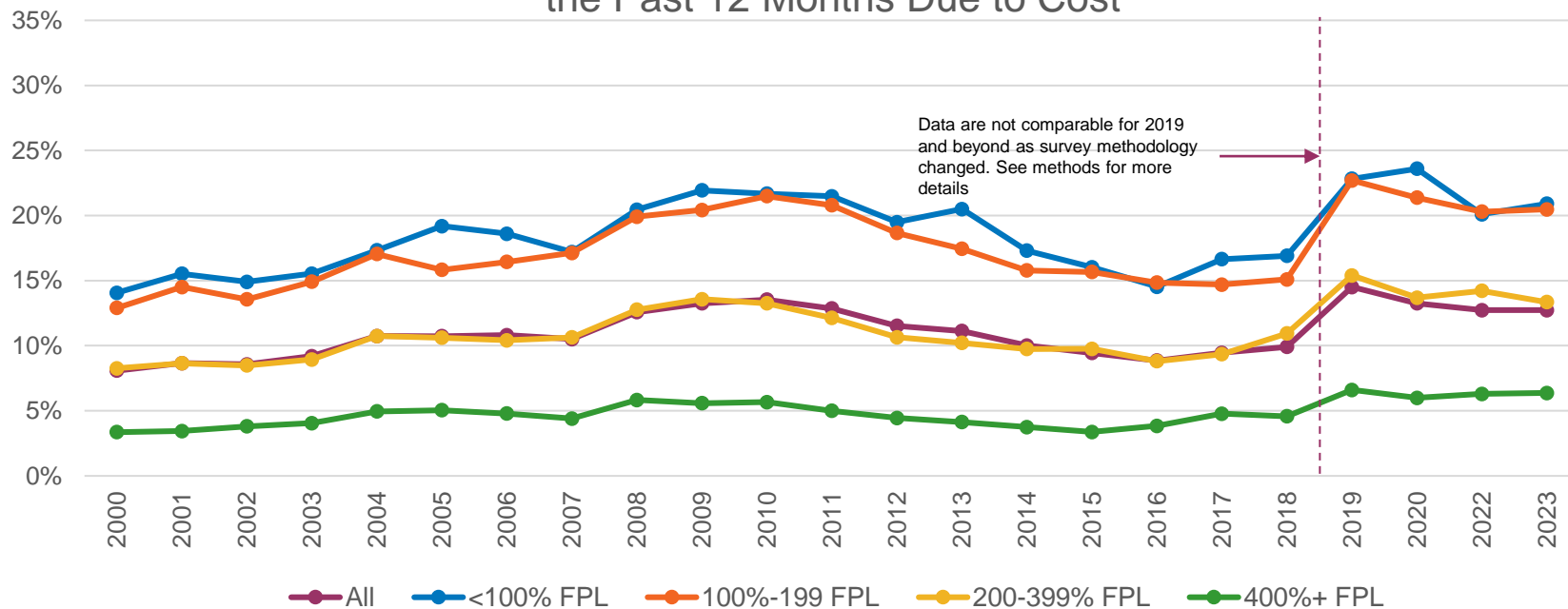
Cost Barriers to Care by Race/Ethnicity & Age

Percentage Who Did Not Obtain Needed Dental Care Services During the Past 12 Months Due to Cost – **Seniors (Ages 65+)**



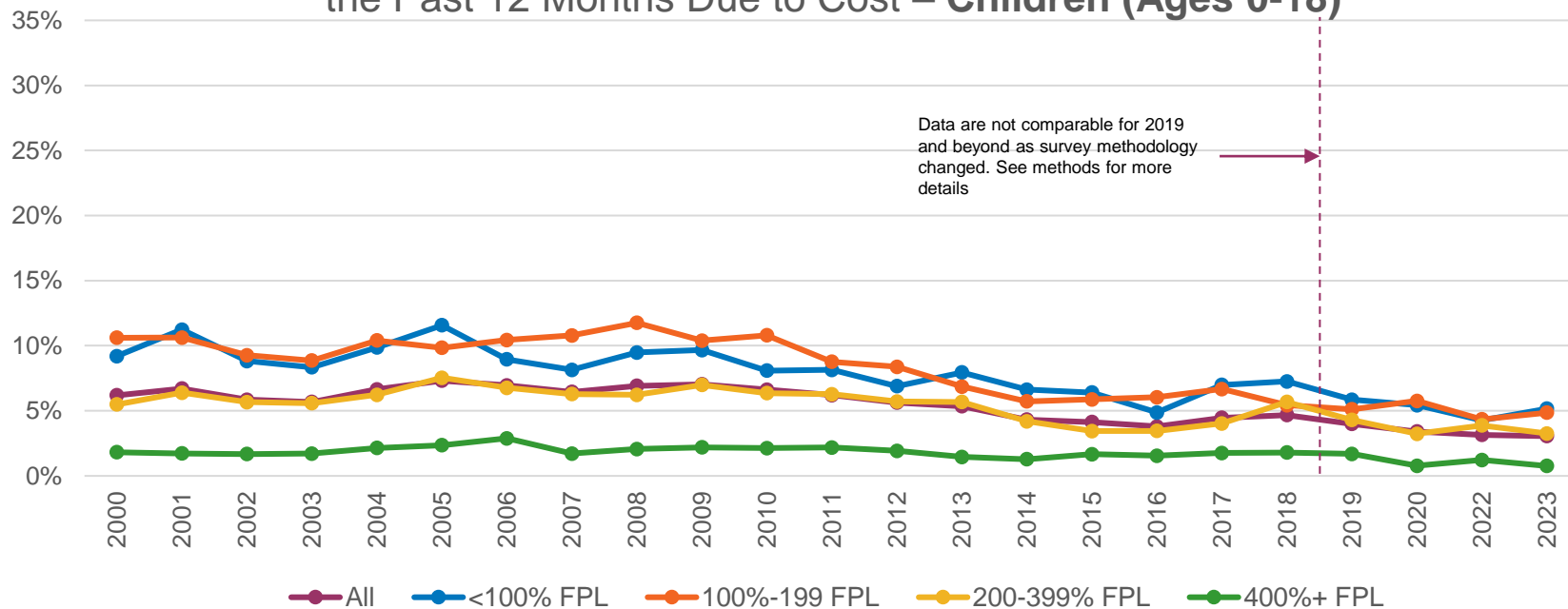
Cost Barriers to Care by Income Level

Percentage Who Did Not Obtain Needed Dental Care Services During the Past 12 Months Due to Cost



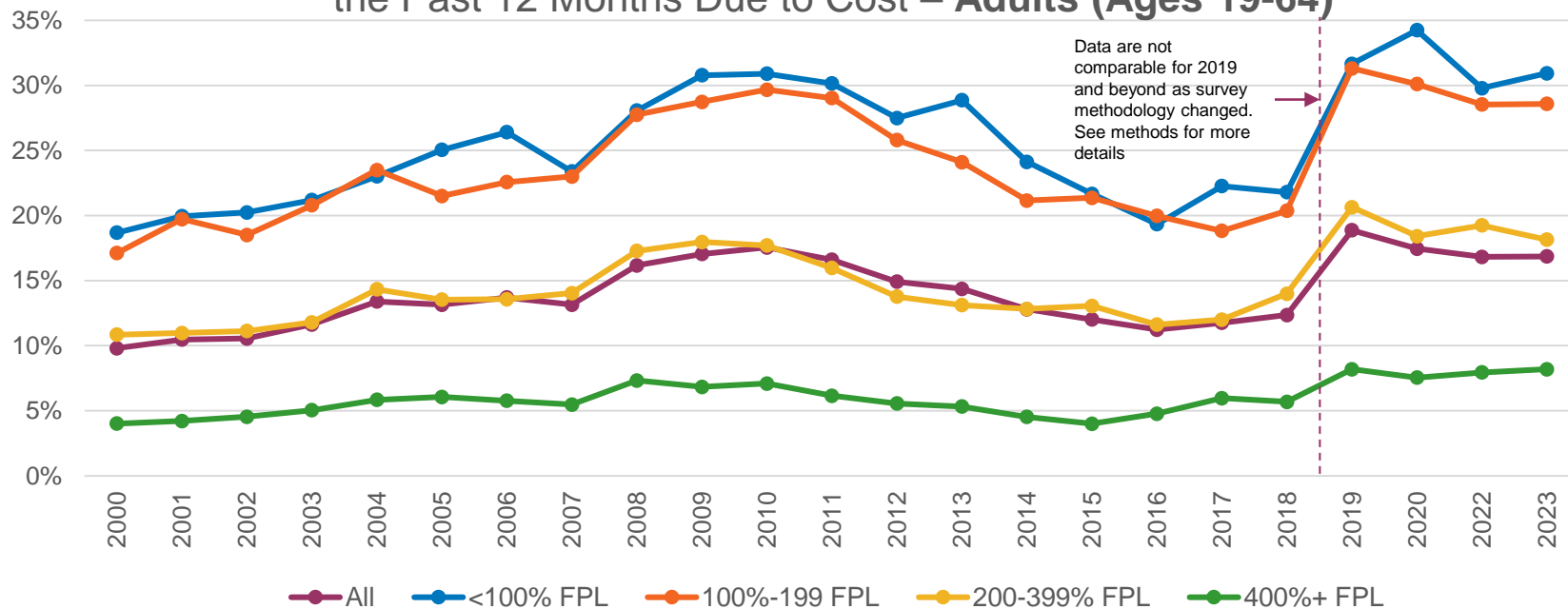
Cost Barriers to Care by Income Level & Age

Percentage Who Did Not Obtain Needed Dental Care Services During the Past 12 Months Due to Cost – **Children (Ages 0-18)**



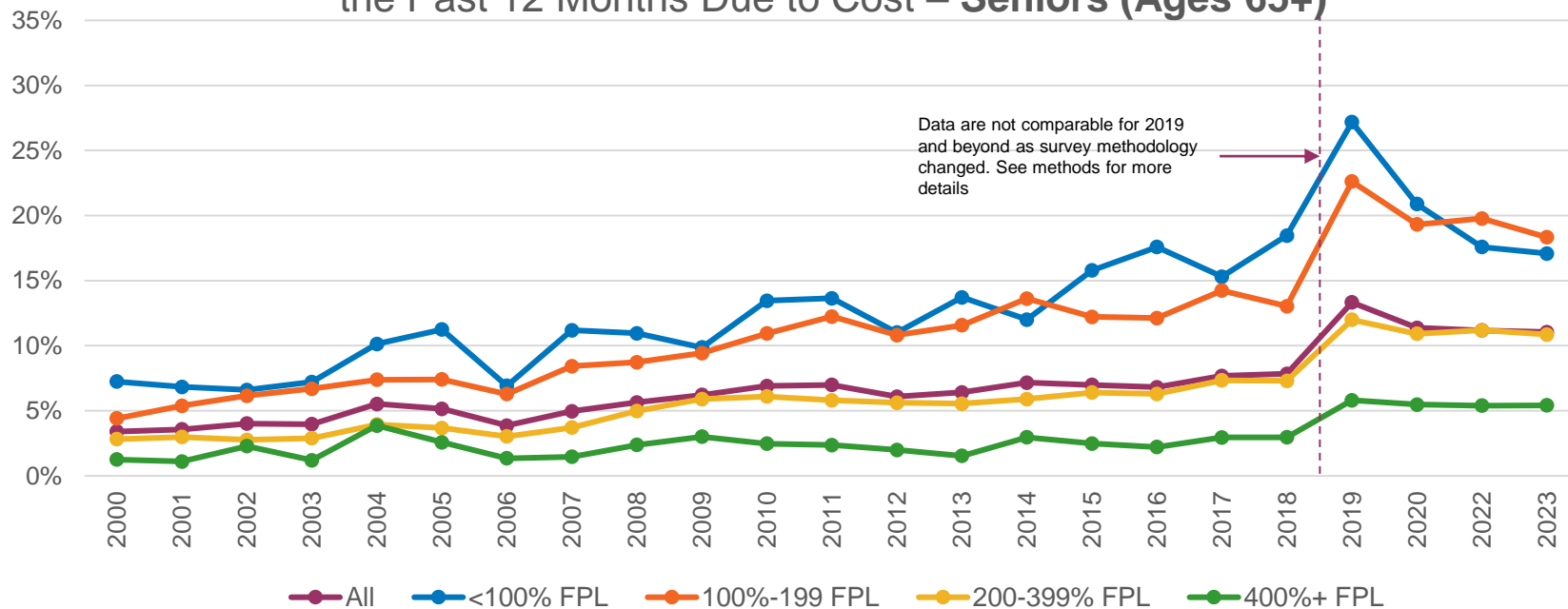
Cost Barriers to Care by Income Level & Age

Percentage Who Did Not Obtain Needed Dental Care Services During the Past 12 Months Due to Cost – **Adults (Ages 19-64)**



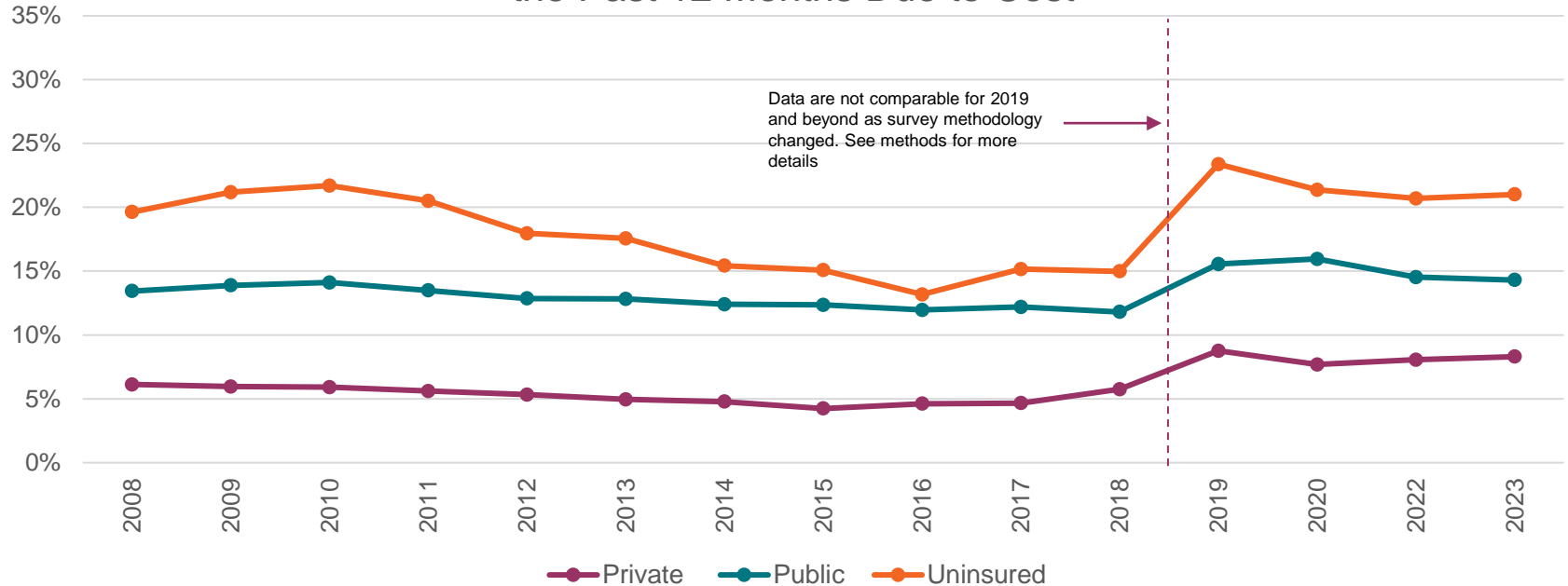
Cost Barriers to Care by Income Level & Age

Percentage Who Did Not Obtain Needed Dental Care Services During the Past 12 Months Due to Cost – **Seniors (Ages 65+)**



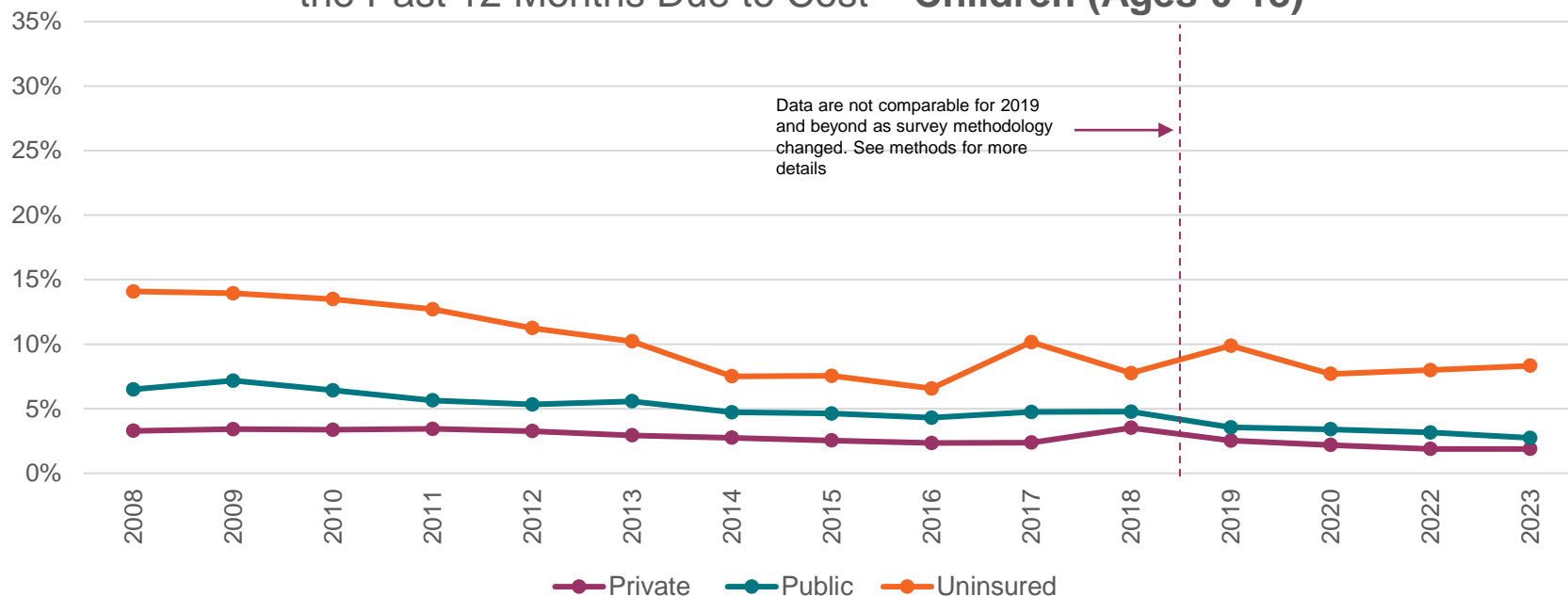
Cost Barriers to Dental Care by Insurance Status

Percentage Who Did Not Obtain Needed Dental Care Services During the Past 12 Months Due to Cost



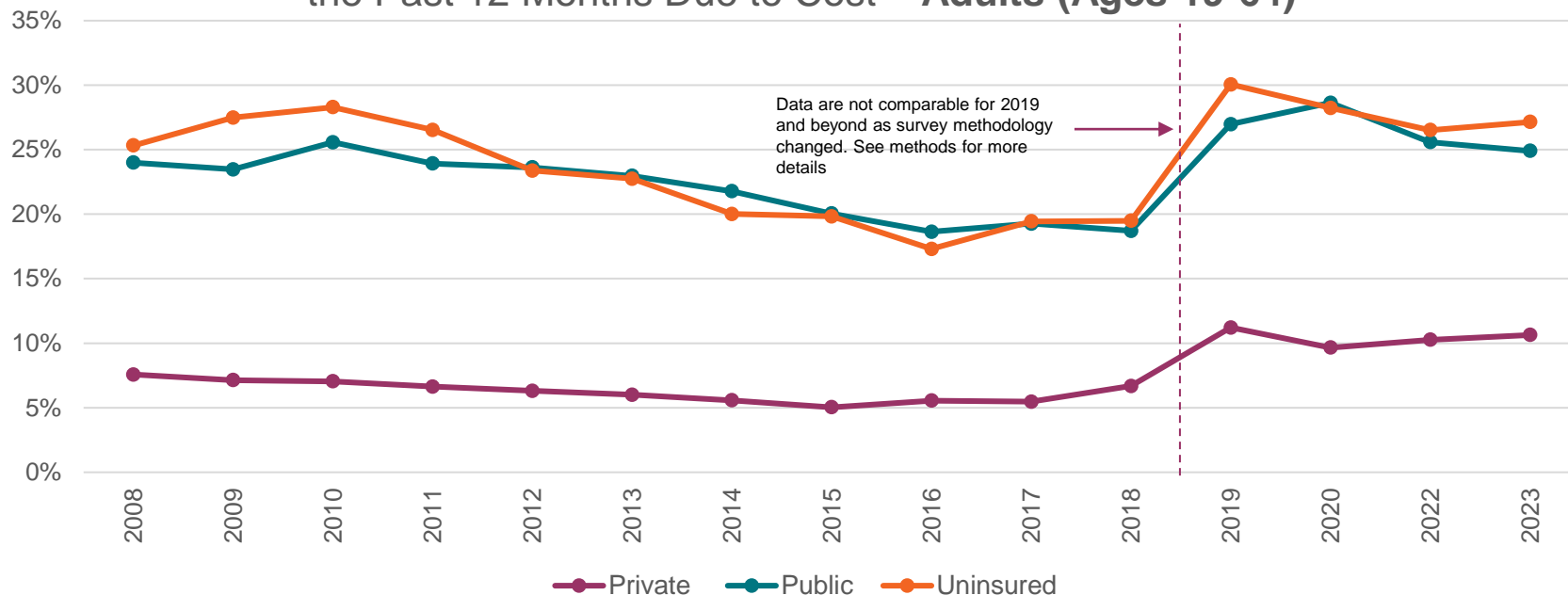
Cost Barriers to Dental Care by Insurance Status & Age

Percentage Who Did Not Obtain Needed Dental Care Services During the Past 12 Months Due to Cost – Children (Ages 0-18)



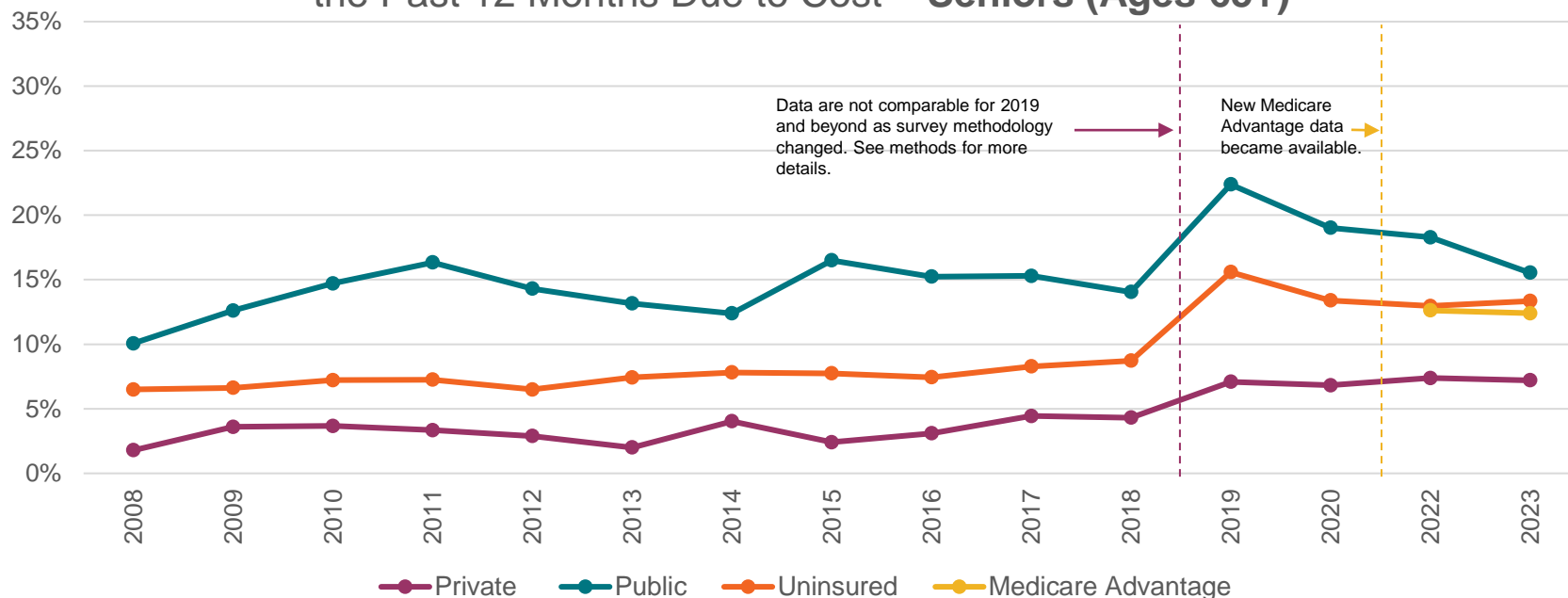
Cost Barriers to Dental Care by Insurance Status & Age

Percentage Who Did Not Obtain Needed Dental Care Services During the Past 12 Months Due to Cost – Adults (Ages 19-64)



Cost Barriers to Dental Care by Insurance Status & Age

Percentage Who Did Not Obtain Needed Dental Care Services During the Past 12 Months Due to Cost – **Seniors (Ages 65+)**



Data & Methods

Data Sources

- Data on dental care use and dental insurance status are from the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (MEPS) that is managed by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). The latest data available are for 2022.
- Data on cost barriers to various types of health care services are from the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS). The latest data available are for 2023.
- Please review this Data & Methods document for additional information.
https://www.ada.org/-/media/project/ada-organization/ada/ada-org/files/resources/research/hpi/national_trends_dental_use_benefits_barriers_methods.pdf.

Notes

- Race/ethnicity categories are partly driven by data availability and categories provided in the MEPS and NHIS data.
- For cost barriers to care data, there was a change in the way the question was asked by NHIS beginning in 2019. This is denoted by a dotted line in the applicable charts. Trends can be analyzed pre-2019 and then separately for 2019 and beyond but not across 2019. Additionally, in 2021 data were not available for dental services. Lastly, NHIS stopped asking about cost barriers to prescription eyeglasses in 2019.
- For an overview of methodological differences in MEPS, NHIS, NHANES when it comes to estimating dental care use, please refer to this study:

Macek MD, Manski RJ, Vargas CM, Moeller JF. Comparing oral health care utilization estimates in the United States across three nationally representative surveys. Health Services Research. 2002;37(2):499-521.