ORAL HEALTH EQUITY
A NEEDS ASSESSMENT IN COLORADO
CCHI 2022

THE ASSESSMENT
Colorado Consumer Health Initiative (CCHI) conducted a survey to assess Coloradans' oral health needs and experiences to inform CCHI's 2023 policy agenda.

RESPONSES
- 422 COMPLETE RESPONSES
- AGED FROM 18-86
- DIVERSE INCOME AND EDUCATION LEVELS
- RACIAL MAKEUP REPRESENTATIVE OF COLORADO

WHO'S REPRESENTED?

Deeper colors indicate higher number of responses, gray denotes no responses from that county.

STORIES FROM COLORADANS

"Being poor, you get treated differently."
Age 41 | Alamosa, CO

"Pain in a tooth with a crown. It is taking 8 days to get an appointment that fits with my schedule, so I can avoid missing work."
Age 57 | Golden, CO

"I stopped going because they didn't listen to me and they gave me partials (dentures) that hurt."
Age 70 | Denver, CO

"All parts of dental care are expensive I believe out-of-pocket costs are currently the most expensive."
Age 28 | Del Norte, CO
Despite the desire for good dental health, Coloradans report high rates of poor or below average dental health, mouth pain, self-consciousness about mouth appearance, and changes to their day-to-day lives caused by dental health issues.

WHAT'S NEXT?
Policy makers and advocates should make oral health policy a priority to improve health, well-being, and equity for all Coloradans. These survey results underscore the gaps in access, affordability, and quality of care. Share your experience with oral health by visiting cohealth.co/sharehealthstory, or get involved with our Oral Health Equity Coalition at cohealth.co/OralHealthCoalition.

KEY TAKEAWAYS
People understand and feel that oral health is important, but the system doesn’t represent them, is hard to access, and expensive.

Over 50% are living with oral pain or feeling self-conscious about their oral health.

On a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being very important and 5 being not important at all, 74% selected "Very Important" and 24% selected "Important", showing 98% of those surveyed, believe oral care is important.

Barriers to going to the dentist

Fear and anxiety, stemming from judgmental providers and staff, are also strong factors preventing patients from getting care.

50% of those surveyed felt that the time between scheduling an appointment and seeing a provider was too long.

2 + MONTHS was the average length of wait time for a routine cleaning appointment, with 37% waiting 4 months or more.

1 IN 4 of those who have not sought needed care cite fear, judgment, anxiety, or pain as a factor.

47% of patients needing immediate care had to wait over 1 month for an appointment. Only 20% of patients seeking immediate care for dental problems were able to get an appointment within days.

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While respondents have a strong history of dental visits and routine care, access is a challenge, primarily driven by financial concerns with 73% saying it’s too expensive.

Just under 13 percent reported no barriers. Reasons provided in the “Other” section included: language barrier, provider did not like me, not priority, child care, judgment, fear, COVID.

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