Maintaining good oral health as an older adult is a daily challenge, and one which may be out of their control to address because of barriers such as:

- **59%** of lower income older adults have no dental insurance
- **58%** of lower income older adults have no plan in place to pay for dental care once retired
- **52%** of all older adults are either unsure or don’t know Medicare does not include dental coverage

**State:** Inadequate Policies

- **8 STATES** cover no dental services
- **4 STATES** cover all dental services for services through adult Medicaid Dental Benefits
- **5 STATES** still have 60 percent or more residents living in communities unprotected by fluoridated water
- **23 STATES** have never completed a Basic Screening Survey of older adults and have no plan to do so
- **42 STATES** lack a State Oral Health Plan that mentions older adults and has SMART objectives

**National:** Lack of Coverage

- **59%** lower income older adults have no dental insurance
- **2.5x** older adults with dental insurance are 2.5 times more likely to visit the dentist on a regular basis
- **58%** lower income older adults have no plan in place to pay for dental care once retired
- **52%** of all older adults are either unsure or don’t know Medicare does not include dental coverage

**National:** Recommendations

1. Support policies that allow older adults to live healthy & independently, such as the Older Americans Act
2. Support policies that recognize caregivers, such as the RAISE Family Caregivers Act
3. Advocate for financially viable Medicare Dental Benefits

**State:** Recommendations

1. Establish or reinstate dental benefits for older adults in Medicaid
2. Sustain or advocate for Community Water Fluoridation
3. Include specific objectives for older adults in State Oral Health Plans
4. Develop surveillance of older adults’ oral health status through Basic Screening Surveys

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Data and recommendations derived from Oral Health America’s 2015 Public Opinion Poll, conducted by Harris Interactive, Oral Health America’s A State of Decay, Vol. III report and the following sources: