

## **ACL Releases New Brief on Importance of Oral Health**

Good oral health is critical for older adults and younger adults with disabilities. Poor oral health is largely preventable and linked to a person's overall health and serious chronic diseases. Unfortunately, older adults and adults with disabilities are at high risk of having poor oral health due to inadequate access to services and certain disabilities that make oral hygiene tasks hard to complete and obtaining services even more difficult.

While Medicare does not cover most oral health services, states have a number of options for expanding oral health, as this [policy brief \(PDF, 233KB\)](#) describes.

Publicly-funded dental preventive and treatment services for adults are sparse because Medicare covers only a few medically-related dental procedures.

Additionally, many state Medicaid programs have little dental coverage for adults. Some funding for oral health is available under the Public Health Service Act through the Health Resources and Services Administration's Community Health Centers Program. The 2016 Older Americans Act Reauthorization added oral health to the list of its disease prevention and health promotion services.

For more details on this issue and potential options for expanding access to oral health, read the full [policy brief from ACL \(PDF, 233KB\)](#).