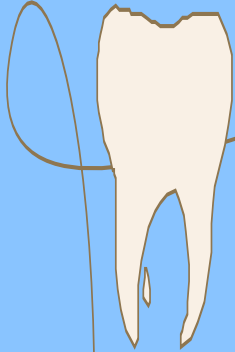
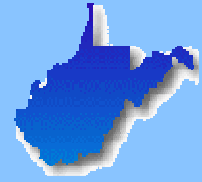


# 10 facts every WV legislator should know about oral health

from West Virginia Partners for Oral Health



## 1. How does dental disease affect the children of WV and how prevalent is it?

- About 65 percent of West Virginia children have cavities by age 8. About one of every three children in the state suffers from untreated decay.
- Dental disease hits especially hard among poor children. About 80 percent of cavities are in 20 percent of children — mostly low-income kids.
- Only 36 percent of West Virginia children eligible for Medicaid saw a dentist last year.
- Dental decay can affect a child's ability to eat, speak and learn. Approximately 51 million hours of school hours are missed annually due to dental decay U.S.

Sources: West Virginia Healthy People study, US Surgeon General's report on Oral Health, "The Cost of Ignoring Children's Oral Health" Children's Dental Health Project

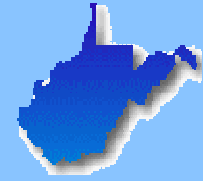
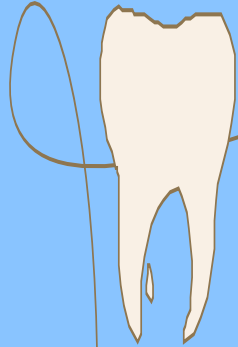
2. **School-based dental health initiatives-** The Appalachian Regional Commission along with the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation has partnered with Marshall University to provide funding to 17 school-community oral health projects this past year. Projects are as varied as the communities who developed them. All 17 focus on providing a dental home to each child that participates.

3. **Dental Disease** is the cause of 20 million lost work days, 117,00 lost school hours (per 100,00 children), 6 million days of disability, and 42% of Army recruits are not deployable.

Sources: US Surgeon General's Report on Oral Health

4. **Fluoride in West Virginia.** Fluoride is a naturally occurring element found in nature and has been found to be the most cost effective method in reducing cavities especially in children. According to the 2010 PEW Dental Campaign Center on the States report, WV is ahead of the national average having 91.7% of its community water systems fluoridated. The 2010 PEW report also states fluoridation offers an unmatched return on investment, saving \$38 in dental treatment costs for every dollar spent. **However, not all of West Virginia's community water supplies are fluoridated and many children are missing out on this benefit.** According to recent data, WV has:

- three counties having less than 24% of their community water systems fluoridated
- five counties having 25-49% fluoridated community water systems
- four counties having 50-74% fluoridated community water systems
- forty three counties having 75-100% fluoridated community water



5. **Oral Health services for adults.** West Virginia has a limited number of federally qualified health centers that have on-site dental clinics. The dental clinics provide services to individuals and families of all socio-economic status.
6. Within the network of **WV's free clinics**, there are only three clinics that provide oral health services to adults that are either under insured or non-insured. There is a continual back-log of patients at these clinics demonstrating that the demand far surpasses the output.
7. WV is close to completing a **CDC approved, state oral health plan**. The plan is scheduled to debut before the end of the legislative session. The plan will include efforts in your community.
8. The role of **WV Medicaid** and children's access to dentists. The dentists in WV are committed to providing care to the children of their communities. However, they must operate on sound business principles including normal and customary reimbursement rates. Currently, the Bureau of Medicaid Services has filed for an increase in fees. The increase in fee reimbursement is vital to both maintaining and increasing participating dentists in the Medicaid network.
9. Does oral health really affect **employability of West Virginians workforce**? The answer is Yes! According to the United States Surgeon General's report on Oral Health, employed adults miss more than 164 million hours of work nationally due to dental diseases or dental visits. Dental disease is preventable.
10. There is a need for continued discussion around improving oral health. **As a legislator**, we understand your concern for optimizing the health of your constituents. Oral health is a part of that package. We encourage you to talk with the dental professionals in your local community.

**For more information, please log onto the WV Partners for Oral Health website at [www.oralhealthwv.org](http://www.oralhealthwv.org)**

