

## OVERVIEW

Oral health is essential to an individual's overall health and well-being, and a growing body of research demonstrates this connection. Oral health means more than healthy teeth. It contributes to controlling and avoiding chronic disease and pain, as well as elevates confidence and self-esteem.

Although much is known about the importance of oral health and the power of prevention, there remains significant disparities in dental access across the state of Wisconsin and locally in Milwaukee County. The largest burden of dental disease falls among marginalized groups who often face barriers to accessing dental services. These individuals may be uninsured, at a lower socioeconomic status, have Medicaid for dental coverage, or experience other social, personal, and environmental factors that impact health.

## PURPOSE

- Promote oral health awareness, prevention, and education
- Serve as a forum for information exchange and networking for MOHC members and other interested community partners on oral health, including access to care, advocacy, data collection and analytics, and literature review to drive change
- Develop cohesion across membership organizations to ensure alignment and eliminate fragmentation and duplication of efforts and resources
- Lead and/or participate in advocacy efforts that secures adequate and affordable oral health coverage for this population and thus increase access, especially for those utilizing Medicaid or who are uninsured



## PARTICIPATING MEMBERS

- Aurora Health Care
- Ascension Wisconsin
- Bread of Healing Clinic
- Children's Health Alliance of Wisconsin
- Children's Wisconsin
- Community Smiles Dental
- Greater Milwaukee Dental Association
- Marquette University School of Dentistry
- Medical College of Wisconsin
- Milwaukee Health Department
- Milwaukee Health Services, Inc.
- Muslim Community and Health Center
- Outreach Community Health Center
- Progressive Community Health Centers
- Sixteenth Street Community Health Centers
- Wisconsin Department of Health Services
- Wisconsin Primary Health Care Association

## CURRENT STRATEGIES

- Inform state and local public health policy
- Enhance oral health care navigation, connection, and coordination— **dental access directory published in 2022**
- Improve access to urgent, routine, and preventative oral health care for those on Medicaid and the uninsured
- Improve Medicaid MCO dental access and network adequacy



In 2021 in Wisconsin, nearly 20,000 emergency room visits for preventable dental conditions were reported

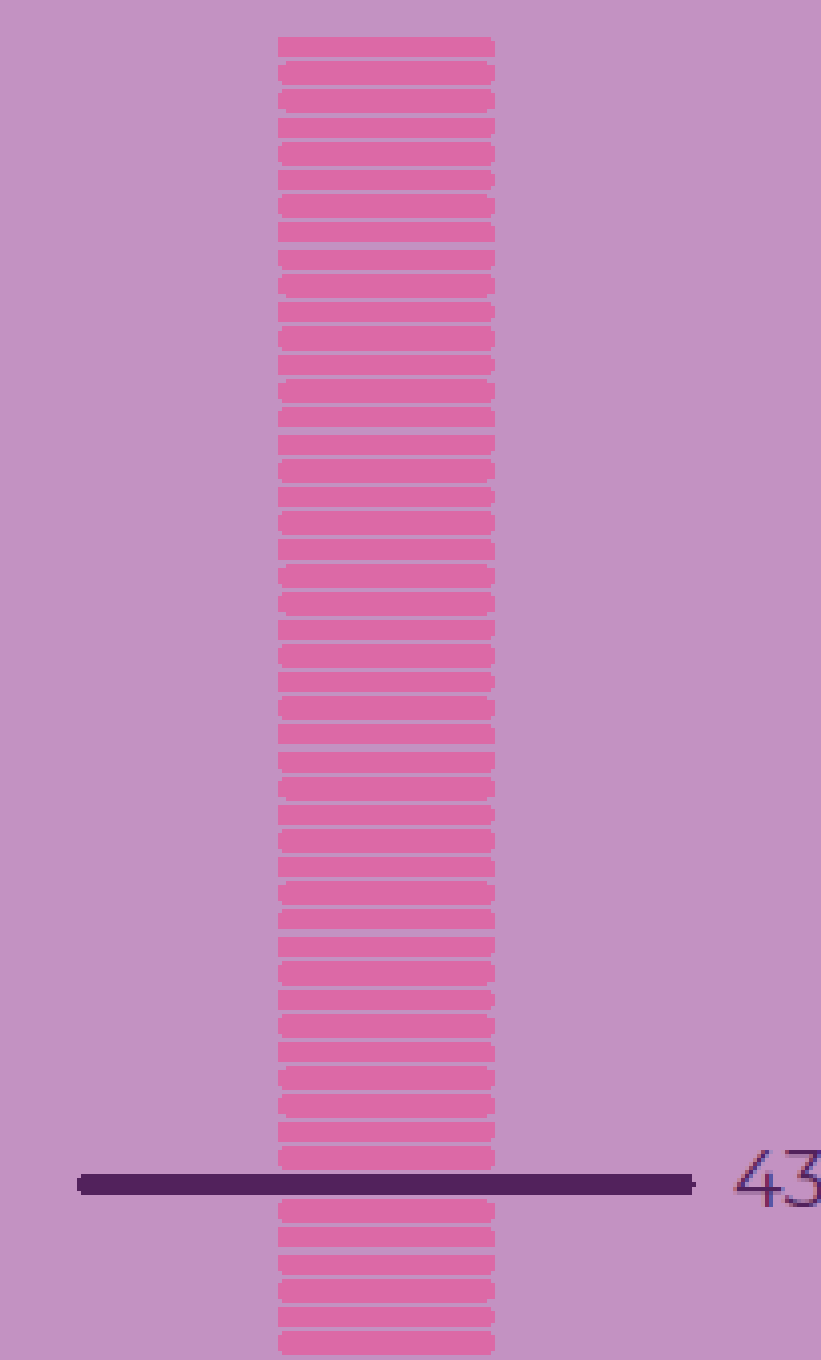
[Wisconsin EPA Tracker](#)



In 2020, only 33% of those ages 1 to 20 who were eligible to receive Medicaid funded dental preventive services actually received them

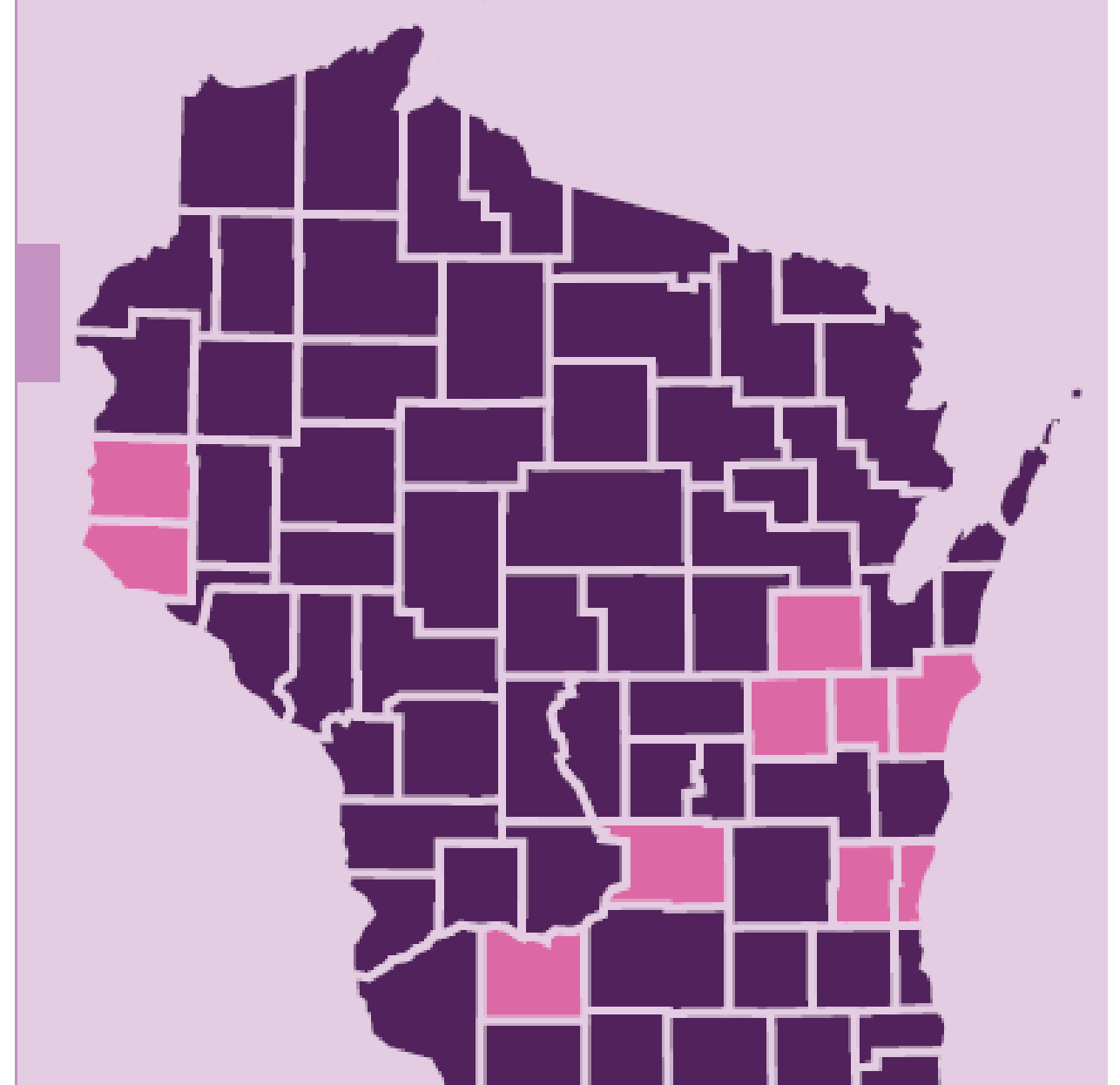
<https://kidshealthcareport.ccf.georgetown.edu/states/wisconsin/>

Wisconsin ranks 43rd in the nation for access to dental care for children



Evers' proposals on dental care: 'Putting money where the mouth is' ([jsonline.com](https://www.jsonline.com))

62 out of the 72 counties are considered dental professional shortage areas affecting over 2 million residents



<https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/charts/9?state=WI>