

## OVERVIEW

Oral health is essential to a person'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 remain 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 to drive change
- Develop cohesion across membership organizations to ensure alignment and effective use of efforts and resources
- Lead and/or participate in advocacy efforts that secure adequate and affordable oral health coverage for the underserved, thus increasing access, especially for those utilizing Medicaid or who are uninsured



## PARTICIPATING MEMBERS

- Ascension Wisconsin
- Aurora Health Care
- Bread of Healing Clinic
- Children's Health Alliance of Wisconsin
- Children's Wisconsin
- Community Smiles Dental
- Gardetto Family Dental Community Clinic
- Greater Milwaukee Dental Association
- Marquette University School of Dentistry
- Medical College of Wisconsin
- Milwaukee Health Care Partnership
- 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 updated in 2025)
- Improve access to urgent, routine and preventative oral health care for those on Medicaid and the uninsured
- Improve Medicaid MCO dental access.
- Monitor and support prevention, early intervention and access for target populations, such as through medical dental integration



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

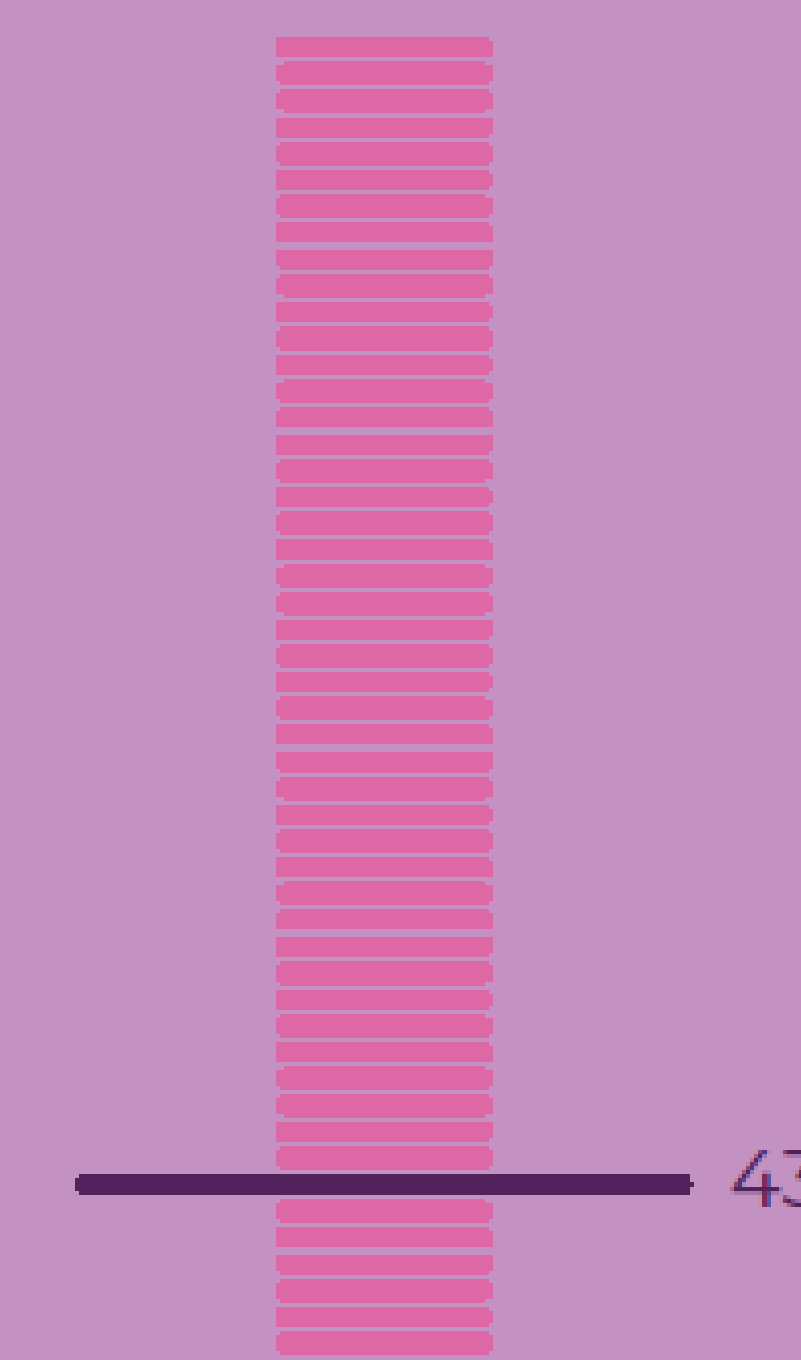
Wisconsin EPA Tracker



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

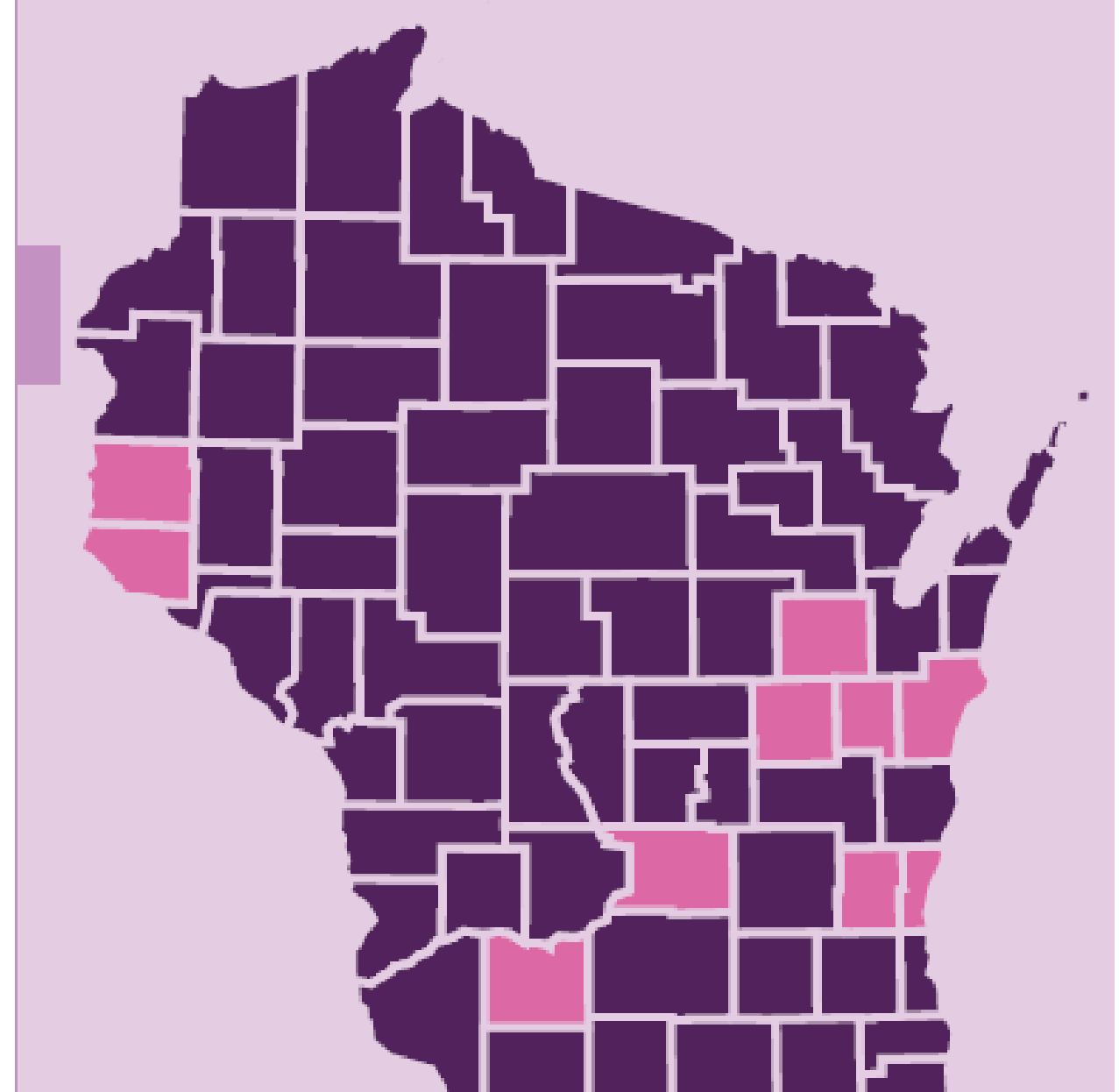
<https://kidshealthcareport.ccf.georgetown.edu/states/wisconsin/>

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)

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>