

Hennepin County  
Public Health  
Assessment Team

# FACT SHEET



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Public Health

# Adult oral health care

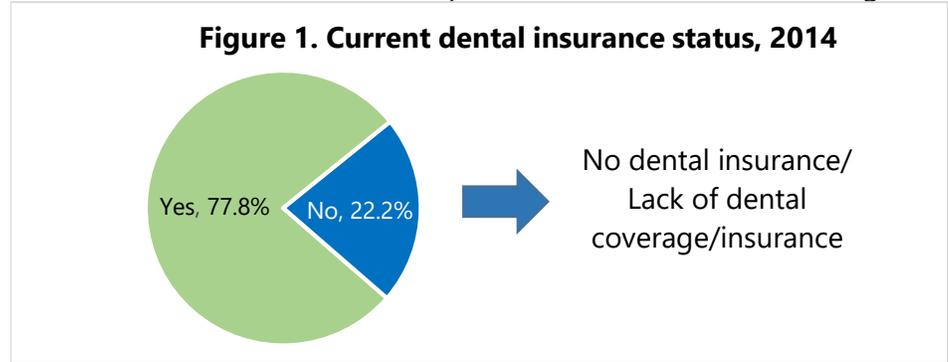
## Why is this indicator important?

Oral health, including the health of teeth, the mouth, and the surrounding craniofacial structures is essential to general health and quality of life<sup>1</sup>. Americans are enjoying an increasing level of oral health. However, oral health improvements are not being experienced evenly across the population. Lack of access to dental care remains a public health challenge<sup>2</sup>.

## What is the current status?

Two major indicators in adult oral health care were assessed among Hennepin County adults aged 25 and older in 2014. The first is possession of current dental insurance. Most Hennepin County adults (78%) reported they currently have dental insurance that covers part or all of their dental care (Figure 1).

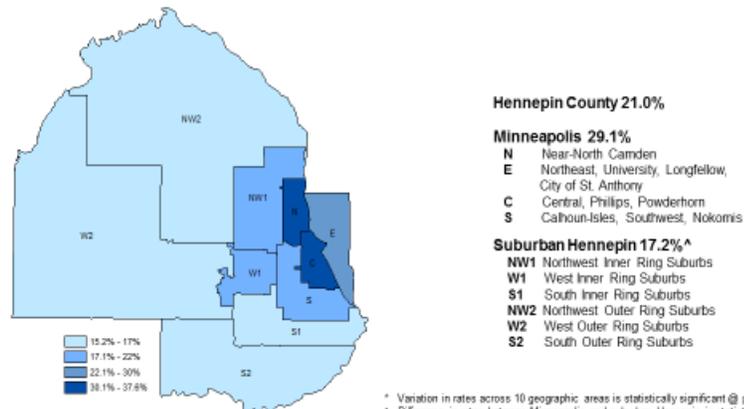
**Figure 1. Current dental insurance status, 2014**



Lack of dental coverage is higher among those who are low income and have lower educational attainment, as well as older adults.

Another indicator of oral care is dental care utilization. Most county adults (79%) visited a dentist or a dental clinic for dental care within the past year. The rate of no dental visit within the past year varies across Hennepin County geographic regions (Figure 2).

**Figure 2. Percentage with no dental visit in the past year by geographic areas, 2014**



<sup>\*</sup> Variation in rates across 10 geographic areas is statistically significant @ p<0.05.

<sup>\*</sup> Difference in rates between Minneapolis and suburban Hennepin is statistically significant @ p<0.05.

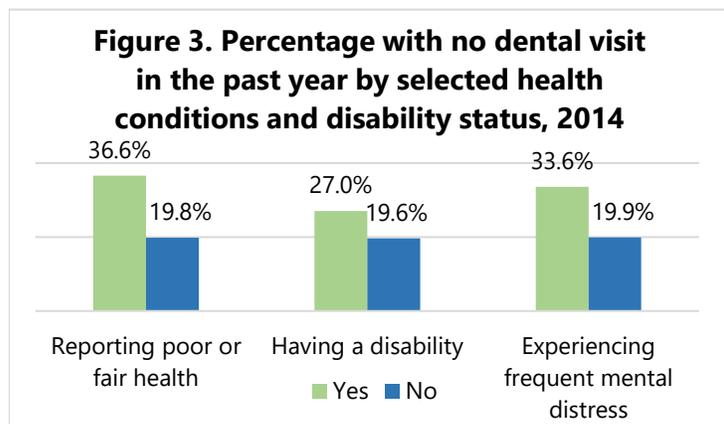
**For more information** on the health of Hennepin County residents, visit: [www.Hennepin.us/PublicHealthData](http://www.Hennepin.us/PublicHealthData) or email: [PublicHealthData@hennepin.us](mailto:PublicHealthData@hennepin.us)

## What are the disparities?

Several groups were more likely to have no dental visit within the last year, especially males (24%), young adults aged 25 to 34 (25%), populations of color (30%), being LGBT (26%). The highest disparities were among lower income residents who are low income (44% for those having household income \$23,000 or less) and those with lower education (42% for those having less than high school educations).

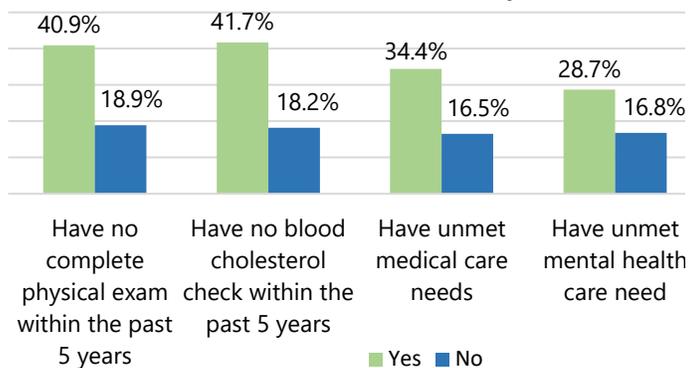
Having dental care coverage matters. Residents with no dental insurance were more likely to report no dental visit than those with dental insurance (39% vs. 16%).

Poor health status is associated with an increased rate of no dental visit within the past year. This includes reporting poor or fair health, having a disability and experiencing frequent mental distress (Figure 3).



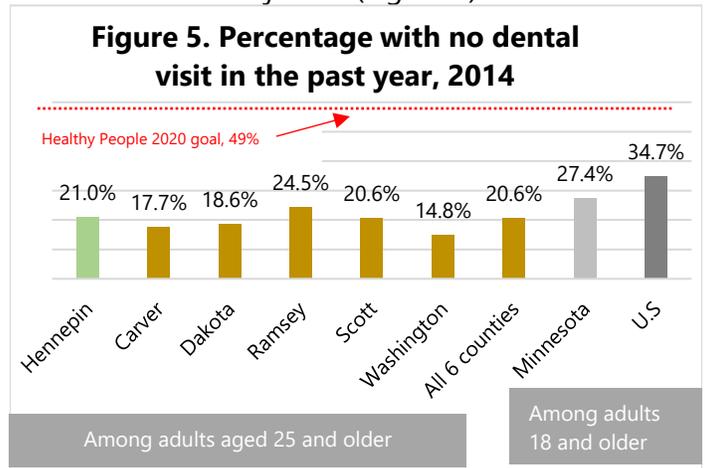
Patterns of health care access are clustered. Residents who do poorly in preventive care, such as those who have had no complete physical exam within the past 5 years or no cholesterol check within the past 5 years also reported a rate of no dental visit within the past year that is double the rates among residents who have had these preventive health care visits completed. Also, the rate of no dental visit within the past year is disproportionately higher among residents who experienced unmet medical care needs or unmet mental health care needs than those who did not. (Figure 4).

**Figure 4. Percentage with no dental visit in the past year by preventive care use and unmet health care needs, 2014**



## How do we compare?

Hennepin County has been monitoring dental care utilization since 2006. The rate of no dental visit in the past year has remained fairly stable. The rate in Hennepin County is comparable to the rate for the other metro counties. Healthy People 2020<sup>3</sup> aims to have at least 49% of US residents aged 2 and older receive oral health care within the past year. In Hennepin County, 78% of adults aged 25 and older had reached this objective (Figure 5).



Data source: The data shown in this fact sheet for Hennepin and other metro counties come from the Metro SHAPE 2014 survey. Details can be found at [www.hennepin.us/shape](http://www.hennepin.us/shape). Data for the Minnesota State come from BRFSS 2014.

Definition of indicator: Lack of dental insurance is assessed via answering, Yes, to the survey question "Do you currently have insurance that pays for all or part of your dental care?". A person answering "Never" or "More than a year ago" to the question "How long as it been since you last visited a dentist or dental clinic for any reason?" was classified as having no dental visit within the past year.

### References:

1. US Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, Office of the Surgeon General. Oral health in America: A report of the Surgeon General. Rockville, MD: National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research; 2000.
2. Healthy People 2020 [Internet]. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion [cited [Accessed on December 15, 2015]. Available from: <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/oral-health>.