

Let's Advocate for Preventive Dental Care for Section 21 and 29 Individuals

Our country has the highest health care costs in the world and spent \$2.6 trillion, or \$8400 per person, in 2010. This was 48% higher than the next big spender, which was Switzerland.

Kaiser Family Foundation. (2012). Health care costs: A primer. Retrieved from <http://kaiserfamilyfoundation.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/7670-03.pdf>

Nationwide, 42% of ER dental complaint visits were for untreated cavities and the patient merely received prescriptions for antibiotics and pain medication. Healthcare dollars spent in 2010 on treating preventable dental problems in the ER was \$867 million to \$2.1 billion, based on variable cost estimate for average dental ER visits.

Wall T. & Nasseh K. (May 2013). Dental-related emergency department visits on the increase in the United States. Health Policy Institute Research Brief. American Dental Association. Available from: http://www.ada.org/sections/professionalResources/pdfs/HPRCBrief_0513_1.pdf

Dental complaints were one of the 20 most common diagnoses in Maine emergency rooms, with nearly 12,000 visits made in 2006. ER use among MaineCare recipients was very high compared to individuals who were privately insured.

Kilbreth, B., Shaw, B., Westcott, D., & Gray, C. (2011). Analysis of Emergency Department Use in Maine: A Study Conducted on Behalf of the Emergency Department Use Work Group of the Maine Advisory Council on Health System Development. January 2010. Retrieved from <http://muskie.usm.maine.edu/Publications/PHIHP/Maine-Emergency-Department-Use.pdf>

ER visits that were dental related at small hospital within the immediate community totaled \$234,000 in 2014. Average cost per visit was \$780. Reimbursement rate was only 58%. Hospital lost \$97,000 due to dental visits.

Source: IT specialist at small Maine hospital.

Researchers in Massachusetts examined dental records of nearly 5,000 individuals with intellectual disability: 32% had untreated cavities, 80% had gum disease, and 10% had no teeth.

Morgan, J. P., Minihan, P. M., Stark, P. C., Finkelman, M. D., Yantsides, K. E., Park, A., ... & Must, A. (2012). The oral health status of 4,732 adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. *The Journal of the American Dental Association*, 143(8), 838-846. Retrieved from <http://www.adajournal.com/content/143/8/838.full>