

# WHY ORAL HEALTH MATTERS IN KENTUCKY



- Kentucky ranks in the **bottom 10** states for dental health.
- Kentucky has more adults age 65+ with no natural teeth than any other state.
- Kentucky has among the highest rates of oral cancer in the nation.



## Poor oral health is linked to:

- Heart disease
  - Diabetes
  - High blood pressure
  - Stroke
  - Alzheimer's disease
- **Over \$45 billion is lost** in productivity in the United States each year because of untreated oral disease.
  - Emergency department visits for non-traumatic dental conditions cost Kentucky around **\$44 million per year**.
  - Children with poor oral health status are nearly **3 times more likely to miss school** because of dental pain.
  - **Dental care is not affordable** for many Kentuckians. Those in the lowest income category are significantly less likely (40.5%) to visit a dentist regularly than those in the highest income category (75.8%).
  - **Dental care can be hard to find** - 92 of 120 counties in Kentucky are designated Health Professional Shortage Areas for dental care.
  - Kentucky has one of the highest smoking rates in the country. Smoking significantly increases risk for **poor oral health, oral cancer, and tooth loss**.
  - Kentucky was among the **top 10 states** most highly affected by the opioid crisis. Substance use is associated with poor oral health.

SCAN FOR THE 2023  
ORAL HEALTH LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

