

# Texas Oral Health Universe

Oral health and whole health are deeply connected, impacting everything from the ability to eat and speak, to academic success, job opportunities, and chronic disease prevention. When everyone has the opportunity to achieve their best oral health, we see healthier, stronger communities.

## WHY ORAL HEALTH MATTERS



### EDUCATION & SCHOOL SUCCESS

**34 MILLION**

lost school instruction hours each year due to tooth decay, the most common chronic disease in U.S. children.<sup>1</sup>



### 243 MILLION LOST PRODUCTIVITY

For U.S. Adults, an estimated **243 million hours are lost due to oral health problems**, costing the economy billions / year.<sup>2,3</sup>



### GATEWAY TO THE BODY

The latest research demonstrates a profound **bidirectional relationship between oral health and systemic chronic illness**. To tackle the body, we have to manage the mouth.<sup>4</sup>

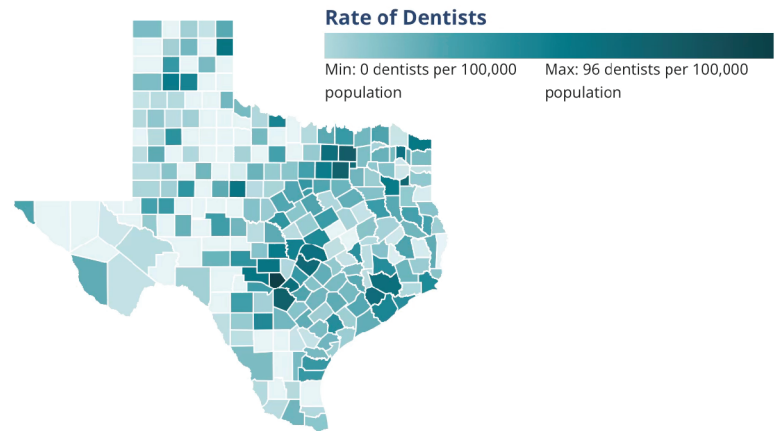


### DOLLAR SENSE

Previous research by Texas Health Institute has **estimated \$3.50 saved for every \$1.00 invested in preventative dental care for Texas adults**, simultaneously better managing chronic conditions.<sup>5</sup>

## 55 COUNTIES WITHOUT A DENTIST

HRSA 2022 / TBSDE 2026 <sup>6,7</sup>



61 County Wide Dental Health Professional Shortage Areas

HRSA 2026<sup>6</sup>

112 Counties with 2 or fewer dentists

TBDSE 2026<sup>7</sup>

53.3 Dentists / 100,000 Texans – 6 Points Lower Than U.S. Average

NCHS 2024<sup>8</sup>



### RURAL CARE SLIPPING

Texas dentists are increasingly concentrated in urban areas, which can make access to care more challenging for many rural communities. In some cases, patients may need to travel hours for care. Even in urban centers, fewer dentists are accepting Medicaid, historically citing low reimbursement rates, last raised in September 2025.



Medicaid in Texas covers routine dental for children, but not adults.

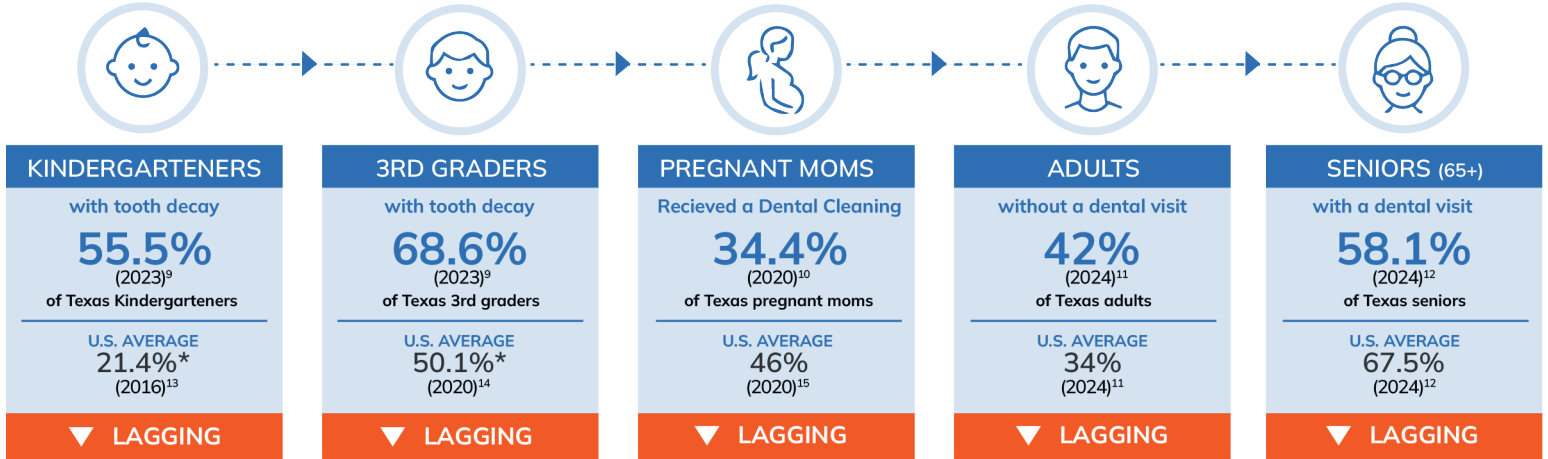


Most adult health insurance plans exclude routine dental care.



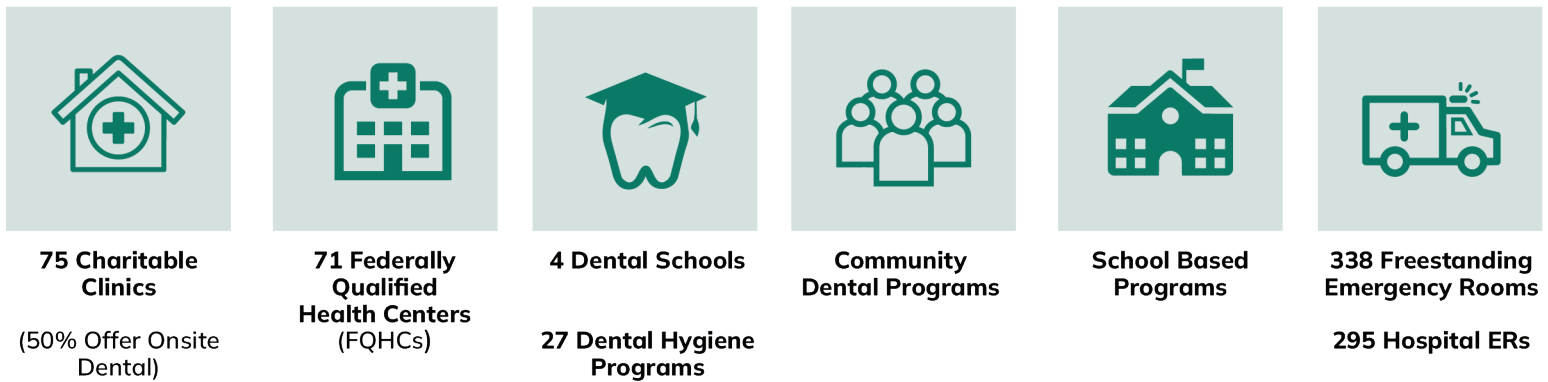
Most U.S. Seniors have Medicare, which does not directly cover dental.

**ORAL HEALTH NEEDS ACROSS THE LIFESPAN**



\* U.S. Kindergarteners is ages 2-5, U.S. 3rd Graders is ages 6-8. Lagging indicates Texas is performing below the U.S. average.

**WHERE DO TEXANS GO FOR UNMET ORAL HEALTH NEEDS**



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