

ORAL HEALTH DISPARITIES IN APPALACHIA



Madison Wills

OVERALL HEALTH DEPENDS ON ORAL HEALTH BUT STILL INDIVIDUALS IN WEST VIRGINIA RANK IT ONE OF THEIR LOWEST HEALTH CONCERNS.

(Veselicky et al. 2013)

KEY CONSIDERATIONS



Decreased access to care



Fatalistic beliefs and dental fear/anxiety



Increased dental caries and decay



Poor oral health hygiene habits



High sugar diets



Socioeconomic barriers



Decreased dental visit utilization



Deficient oral health knowledge



Stigma surrounding oral health

Rural Appalachians who face geographical obstacles are more likely to have worse oral health. (Zhou et al., 2020)



WHAT CAN WE DO?

Together, we can increase oral health education efforts and encourage preventative measures in both younger and older generations.