



Monthly Update

June 2019

Combating the Opioid Epidemic: A Preview of 2019 Virginia Oral Health Summit Featured Speaker

The opioid epidemic is more than just a buzzword: over [1,200 Virginians](#) died from an overdose in 2017. There is no silver bullet to ending the opioid epidemic, but providers, health advocates, and community members can take steps to curb it at every stage by limiting opioid access and treating those experiencing addiction. At the [Virginia Oral Health Summit](#) on November 7, attendees will learn firsthand the role they can play in addressing the epidemic.

Stopping addiction before it starts
Dr. Omar Abubaker is an oral surgeon and featured speaker at the upcoming Virginia Oral Health Summit, who addresses the opioid epidemic through education. "Members of the health care community need to understand not just the epidemic, but pain management alternatives, and substance use disorders." Along with educating providers, Dr. Abubaker encourages patient advocates, community health workers, and home visitors to discuss opioid prescriptions with the patients they see. "Everyone should be educating patients and families on prescription disposal. There should be no medication left in the house, and we can all play a role in providing the

a Upcoming Events

Regional Oral Health Alliance Meetings

August 1 | [Northern Virginia Alliance Children's Oral Health Workgroup](#)

Coalition Wide Events

November 7 | [2019 Oral Health Summit](#)

Donate today to help ensure all Virginians have access to equitable healthcare that includes oral health:

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resources to teach patients how to dispose of prescriptions.”

Addressing substance use disorder effectively

While curbing the number of opioid prescriptions is critical, Dr. Abubuaker recognizes the importance of educating the health community on substance use disorder, “Addiction is here to stay, we need to think of it as a disease and help people learn to manage it.” A [new report](#) in The Journal of the American Dental Association found individuals who had access to oral health treatment while in substance use disorder programs were more likely to complete the program, find employment, and remain drug-free.

The [2019 Virginia Oral Health Summit](#) will address challenges like the opioid epidemic as we work to create a health system that serves all Virginians. Mark your calendars now and visit our [website](#) to learn more about the Summit agenda, early registration specials, and sponsorship opportunities!

Oral Health News & Resources

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Consumer Survey Finds Cost Most Common Barrier to Oral Health Care

A new [consumer survey](#) shows that cost is the most commonly-reported barrier to dental care for adults (22%). The survey, from the Oral Health Workforce Research Center, asked adults about their oral health status and the barriers they face when accessing oral health care. To address barriers to care in Virginia, health advocates continue to push for a comprehensive dental benefit for adults enrolled in Medicaid. Doing so would significantly increase the number of Virginians who are able to receive the oral health care they need.



Consumer Survey of Barriers to and Facilitators of Access to Oral Health Services

New Resources Provide Tools to Address Health Equity

The Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors launched a new resource page on health equity and the social determinants of health. [The page](#) includes resources for providers, community members, and health advocates to understand and address the underlying impact of social determinants of health on health outcomes, and ways to improve health equity among all patients.



CDC Research Finds Older Adults Dental Needs Are Unmet



A recent report by the CDC found less than 30% of US adults 65 and older have dental insurance. The researchers also found race and income disparities; while 31% of non-Hispanic white adults have insurance, only 17.5% of Hispanic adults and 29% of non-Hispanic black adults have dental insurance. For those who were considered "poor," only 8% have dental insurance compared to 36% among "not poor" older adults. The

direct links between oral health and chronic disease underscore a need to make health insurance more accessible for older adults. Learn more about the study [here](#).



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