

Health Care Access

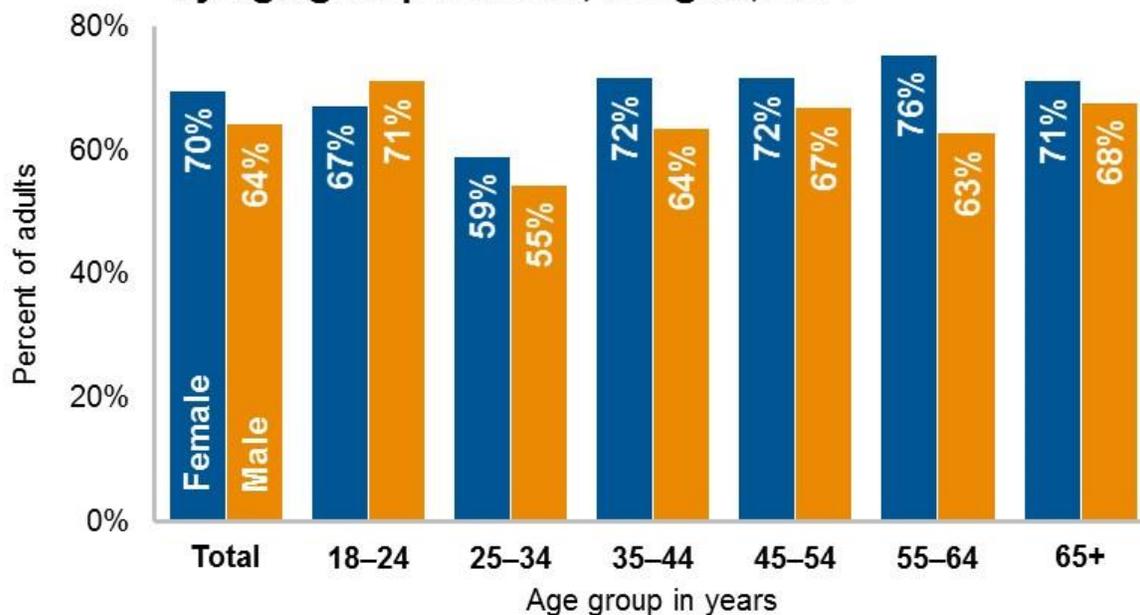
Dental visits

A healthy mouth is an important part of overall health, and regular visits to a dentist can help keep your teeth and gums healthy. Regular examinations and good oral hygiene can prevent most dental disease. Dental professionals can help detect oral health problems early on when treatment is likely to be easier and more affordable. They can also provide preventive services that can avoid many problems from developing in the first place.

The percentage of adults with any dental visits in the past year is a marker for access to dental care services. Overall in 2014, 64% of adult males and 70% of adult females had at least one dental visit in the past year in Oregon (Figure 1). This visit could be for preventive services, restorative care, or emergency treatment for a dental problem.

FIGURE 1

Adults with any dental visits in past year by age group and sex, Oregon, 2014

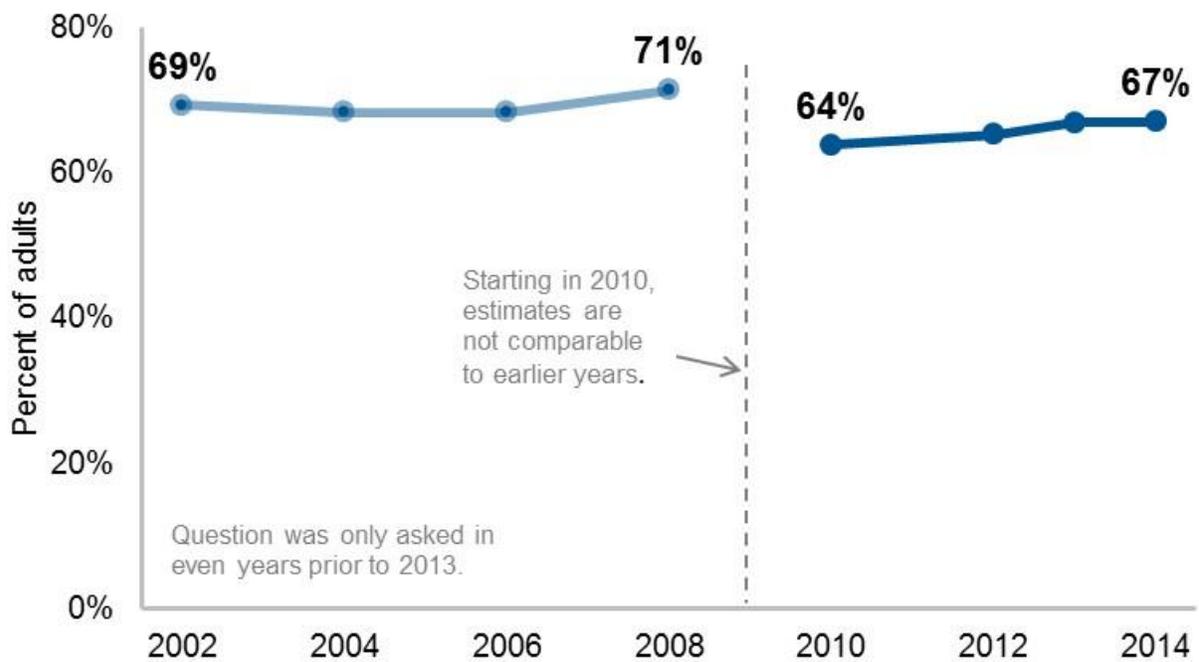


Source: Oregon Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)

Dental visit rates in Oregon have remained stable since 2002 (Figure 2). In subsequent years, we hope to see an increase in dental visits. As of January 1, 2014, all non-pregnant adults who qualify for the Oregon Health Plan (Medicaid) in Oregon receive the same package of benefits, which includes comprehensive dental. Before 2014, the majority of adults who qualified for Medicaid received only an emergency dental benefit. Full benefits were reserved for those who could meet certain eligibility requirements, such as adults who were aged, blind, or disabled and receiving at or below supplemental security income standard. Pregnant women continue to receive a slightly enhanced level of benefits.

FIGURE 2

Adults with any dental visits in past year by year, Oregon

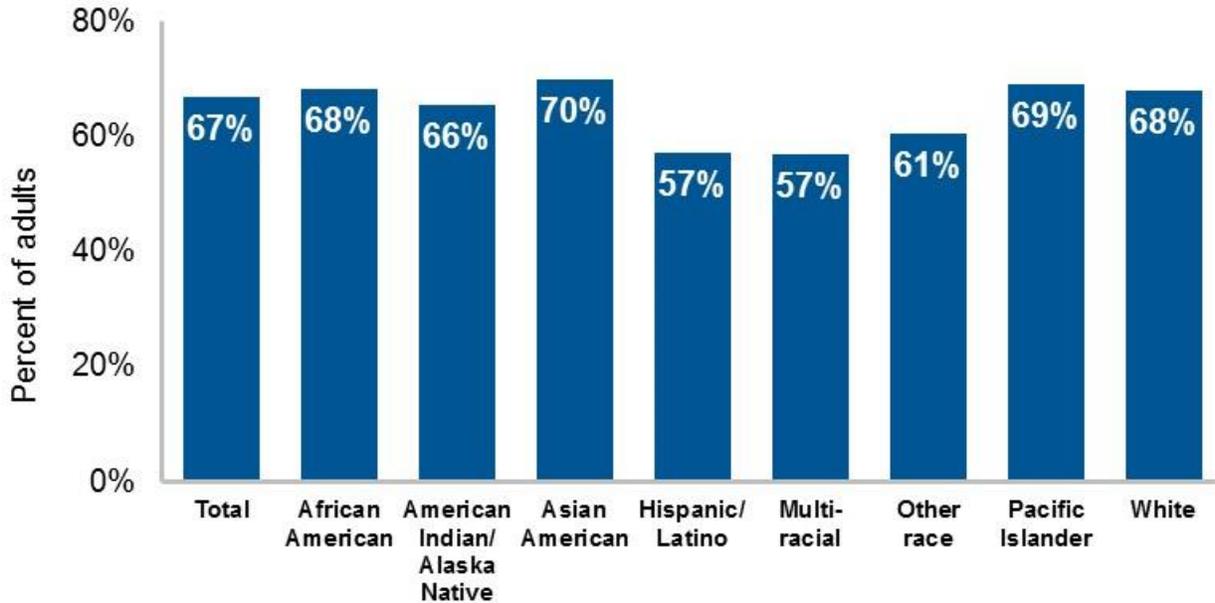


Source: Oregon Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)

In Oregon, disparities exist in accessing timely dental care based on geographic residence, household income, and race and ethnicity. Hispanic/Latino, Native American and multiracial adults receive dental care at rates well below white adults (Figure 3). These disparities persist because there are a multitude of barriers, including lack of dental insurance, under-representation of a culturally diverse workforce, and cultural and linguistic obstacles, which need to be addressed in our communities.

FIGURE 3

Adults with any dental visits in past year by race/ethnicity, Oregon, 2014



Notes: All other groups exclude Hispanic ethnicity

Source: Oregon Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)

Additional Resources: [Oregon BRFSS](#)

About the Data: Data source is the Oregon Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). BRFSS is a telephone survey conducted annually among non-institutionalized adults age 18+. Since 2010, the BRFSS data have included cell phone respondents as well as those reached by landline, and data weighting methods have changed. Therefore, caution should be used in interpreting changes over time. Data include respondents who reported having visited a dentist, dental hygienist, or dental clinic in the past 12 months. From the question: “How long has it been since you last visited a dentist or a dental clinic for any reason? Include visits to dental specialists, such as orthodontists”.

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