

Factors Affecting Access to Dental Care for Seniors in Rural Iowa

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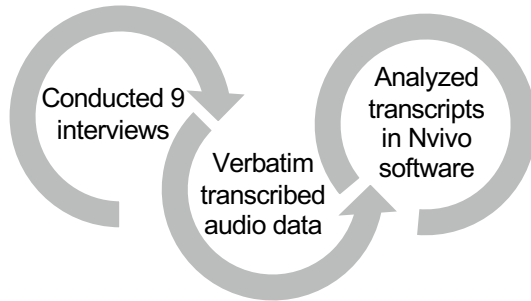
INTRO

Rural communities face unique challenges accessing dental services, and seniors comprise a large proportion of rural population

RQ: What barriers to dental care are persisting in rural, Iowa communities?

RQ: What role do existing programs and resources play in alleviating barriers seniors are facing?

METHODS



9 interviews were completed with 14 people in group or individual discussions

5 different agencies interviewed

- Iowa Department of Public Health
- Area Agency on Aging
- I-Smile Silver Coordinators
- Iowa Department on Aging
- Iowa Dental Association

Audio data transcribed verbatim

Transcripts analyze in Nvivo software

MANY ISSUES PREVIOUSLY IDENTIFIED AS DIFFICULTIES FOR SENIORS ARE CONTINUING TO PERSIST IN OUR IOWA COMMUNITIES

AFFORDABILITY OF CARE

"many seniors that I dealt with, particularly those on **very limited incomes**, you'd go into the **dentist as a luxury**"

LACK OF INSURANCE COVERAGE

"**dental services are not covered** under Medicare"

PROVIDER ISSUES

DECREASED DENTISTS
"there's been a **large decline** in the amount of dentists in rural Iowa"

ACCEPTING

DWP/MEDICAID
"not being able to find **a local provider** who will accept them with their conditions or with their financial situation"

TRANSPORTATION

"most of the time travel is a huge issue. Um, it's **they can't drive** or if they don't have family nearby that cannot drive them to an appointment or it's an hour away, you know, that could be a **huge barrier of public transportation**"

EXISTING RESOURCES ARE PRESENT, BUT BARRIERS CONTINUE TO PERSIST

I- Smile Silver

"It's a pilot project. There's much **less capacity**... our three coordinators are kind of it. There's not a lot of locations, time that they have available to go and do the preventive services. We would love to see... more robust program."

Area Agency on Aging

"we try to **help find programs to aid the senior**...in finding dental care and funds to help pay for that"

RESULTS

Barriers continue to persist in rural communities for seniors

Existing programs help seniors coordinate care

DISCUSSION

With increasing size of senior population and declining number of dentists in rural communities, barriers to care are likely to increase

Existing programs are coordinating care for seniors, not providing preventative or screening services like models for children

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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