

Older Iowans Struggle to Access Dental Care

Real Iowans. Real Stories.



The following testimonials provide a snapshot of the difficulties many older Iowans face when they need dental care. Through strategic planning, education and training, advocacy and care coordination, the Lifelong Smiles Coalition is working to find solutions for our greatest generation.

“Finding a dentist who accepts Medicaid here in rural southeast Iowa is difficult. In fact, I have been trying to find a dentist for nearly two years. After several phone calls and a few appointments, I was unable to find a dentist that could treat my dental needs. I was referred to Iowa City but do not have a car or the ability to travel that far. When my mouth and cheek got infected last month, I was able to get into my physician to get antibiotics which helped with the pain. I-Smile™ Silver found an oral surgeon to take on my case, due to the infection and urgency. I am still waiting for my upcoming appointment.”

- 83-year-old female in southeast Iowa

“I went to the emergency room for a dental infection and was prescribed an antibiotic. I can't afford dental care and will continue using the emergency room for dental issues.”

- 79-year-old female in west central Iowa

“I am disabled with several teeth that need to be extracted. I also need dentures. My dental insurance coverage is very limited, but because I have this dental insurance, I was denied Donated Dental. I am able to be seen at the community health center for tooth extractions, but they don't provide dentures.”

- 66-year-old female in north central Iowa

“As a veteran, I was disappointed to discover that as I entered the nursing home, my veteran's benefits that covered the cost of my nursing home did not cover dental benefits. Even though I financially qualify for Medicaid which does cover dental health, I am ineligible because I am a veteran.”

- 70-year-old veteran in eastern Iowa

