



Listening and Learning Session for Veteran Oral Health in Iowa

April 29, 2024

Housekeeping



This session is
being recorded



The materials will
be posted on the
AIDPH website



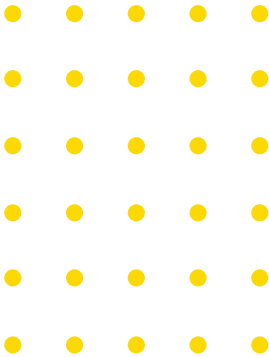
Please chat
and engage
throughout!



CEUs are
available for
this session

Learning Objectives

- Analyze the impact of policies and programs for improving veteran access to dental care, evaluating the potential for replication and expansion.
- Assess the role of policies like the Iowa Veteran Trust Fund in addressing oral health care gaps, and propose strategies for its enhancement and expansion.
- Design advocacy and policy strategies to expand Medicaid eligibility for veterans, focusing on the inclusion of high-risk populations to prevent emergency dental care needs.
- Apply the strategic recommendations from the report to formulate a comprehensive action plan aimed at policymakers and stakeholders for improving the oral health and well-being of veterans in Iowa.



Disclosure

The presenters declare that they do not have a financial arrangement or affiliation with any corporate organization offering financial support or grant monies for this continuing dental education program, nor do they have a financial interest in any commercial product(s) or service(s) they will discuss in the presentation.

Today's Agenda

1

Reviewing the State of Veteran Oral Health in Iowa

2

Identifying policy solutions and advocacy opportunities for Iowa stakeholders

3

Hearing from all of you on how to leverage the report for collective action

What is a Listening and Learning Session?

Didactic presentation
designed to be an
overview of veteran oral
health in Iowa



Discussion session
where attendees
share their thoughts,
feedback, and
opportunities for action

Part One

Part Two

AIDPH's Mission and Vision

MISSION

Empowering our community to advance oral health through science, education, and advocacy

VISION

A justice-oriented oral health system

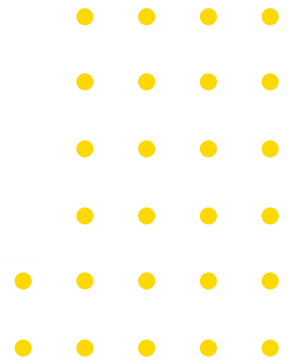




The AIDPH Academy presents a range of engagement opportunities to suit different levels of commitment. Choose from accessible webinars and workshops designed for busy schedules, or dive deeper with our immersive fellowships and the annual colloquium for a more substantial professional development experience.



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Our Communities of Focus



LGBTQIA+

By tailoring preventive and treatment strategies to the unique needs of this community, we can contribute to reducing disparities and promoting oral health equity for all individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or intersex status.



Veterans

By recognizing and addressing the distinct challenges faced by veterans, we can contribute to improving oral health outcomes, promoting preventive care, and enhancing the overall quality of life for those who have served in the military.



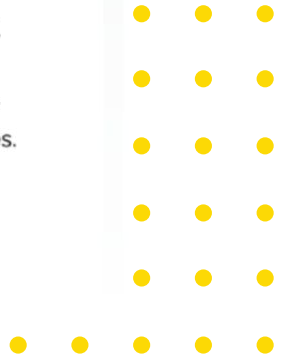
Disabilities

By prioritizing inclusivity, accessibility, and targeted education, we can contribute significantly to improving the oral health outcomes and overall well-being of people with disabilities.



Rural

By addressing the unique challenges faced by residents in rural areas, we can contribute to reducing oral health disparities and improving the overall well-being of these communities.

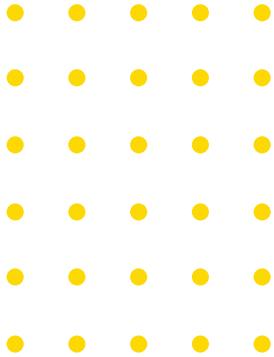




The State of Veteran Oral Health In Iowa

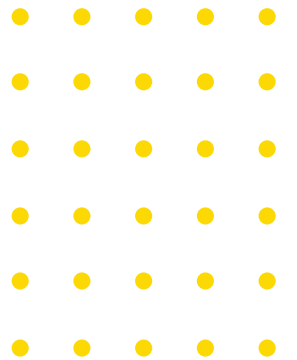
Report Development & Overview

Report Development Timeline



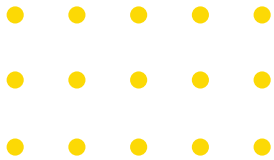
Report Objectives

1. How do oral health outcomes for veterans living in Iowa **differ from nonveterans?**
2. What **factors contribute** to poor oral health among veterans in Iowa?
3. What **opportunities exist** for improving oral health outcomes for veterans in Iowa?
4. What **steps should be taken** to improve oral health outcomes for veterans in Iowa?



Report Development

Process for Report Development



Report Elements



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

National Access
There are 20 million veterans in the U.S. Of those, nine million are eligible for dental care from the Veteran Health Administration (VHA), through the Veteran's Administration (VA) system who are receiving mental care. This means most veterans who are receiving mental care in Iowa, get their dental care through the VA. Most veterans, including those with affordability concerns.

Iowa Access
Approximately 7% of Iowans are veterans. As of 2020, Iowa had 193,861 veterans living in its 99 counties, with 76% having served during a period of war and approximately 184,000 enrolled in the Iowa VA healthcare system. Iowa veterans are experiencing poverty and housing insecurity at higher rates than nonveterans in Iowa. Geographically, Iowa veterans are highly concentrated in rural areas, with a large proportion of those veterans considered to be among the aging community. Veterans are also more likely to live in a Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA).

Oral Health of Iowa Veterans
Most oral health indicators show that Iowa veterans have poorer oral health outcomes than nonveterans. Approximately half of Iowa veterans (52.3%) are at risk of experiencing tooth loss, compared with 37.1% of nonveterans. Nearly one in ten Iowa veterans (9.5%) are completely edentulous, compared with 4.4% of the Iowa adult population. Indicators such as income, education, and age exacerbate those disparities; however, rurality is the largest driver of poor oral health among veterans.

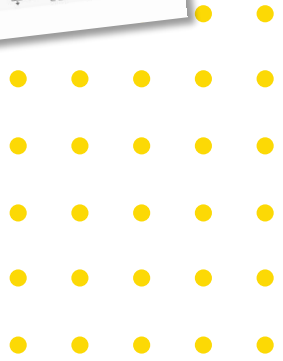
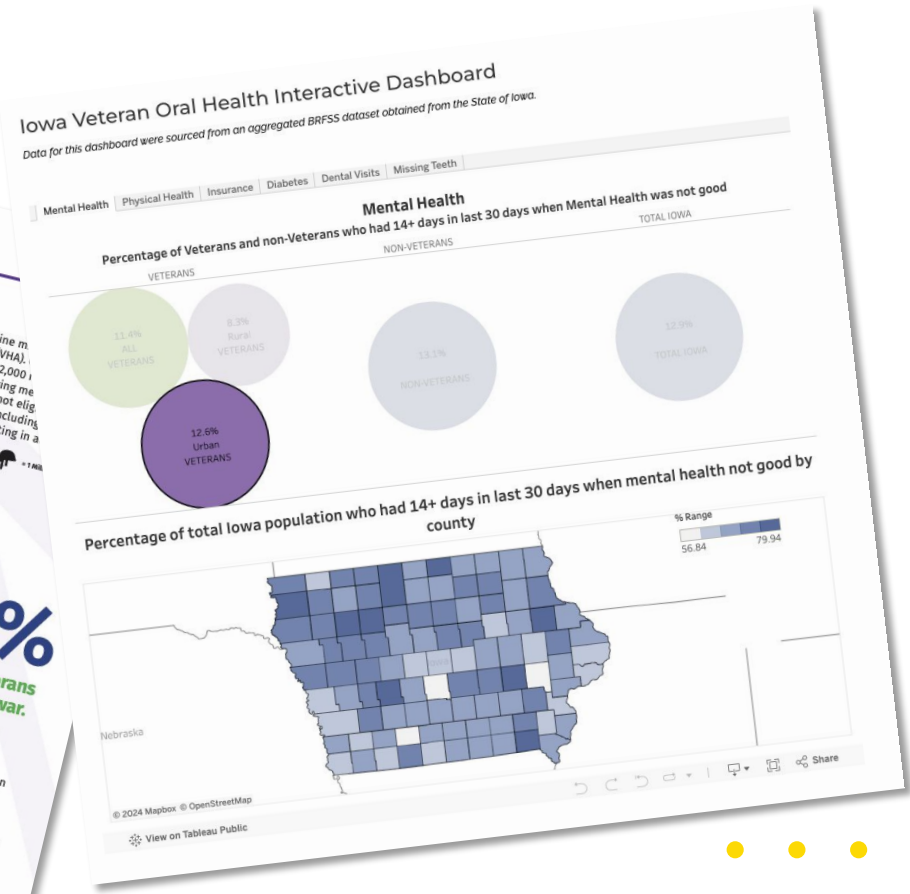
76% of Iowa Veterans served in a war.

Nearly one in ten Iowa veterans (9.5%) are completely edentulous.

52.3% of Iowa Veterans Are at Risk of Experiencing Tooth Loss

20 Million United States Veterans
1.5 Million Veterans Eligible for VHA Dental Care
512,000 Veterans Receive VHA Dental Care

The State of Veteran Oral Health in Iowa



Report Elements



Section 1 provides an overview of the Veterans' Health Administration (VHA) infrastructure, details on healthcare eligibility offered through the Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA), and descriptions of veteran and active-duty service member healthcare benefits. Additionally, this section provides a comprehensive overview of the Iowa veteran population, including information on access and healthcare delivery systems and federal health insurance programs.



Section 2 offers an extensive analysis of veteran oral health at the national, state, and county levels. Moreover, this section provides key insights for dental health professional shortage areas in Iowa, as well as dental visits, edentulism (tooth loss), and dental emergency room visits observed in Iowa.



Section 3 delivers a comprehensive overview of the impact of chronic inflammatory diseases on the Iowa veteran population. Additionally, it underscores the financial burden these diseases place on State and VA expenditures, as well as out-of-pocket expenses for veterans.



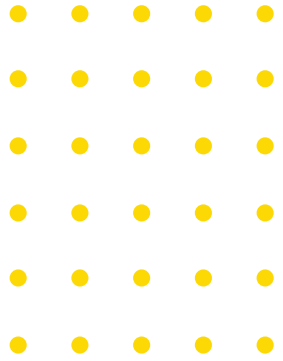
Section 4 highlights trends that emerged from interviews conducted with key Iowa stakeholders regarding the access to, use of, and potential barriers to oral healthcare faced by Iowa veterans. This section reports a compilation of interviewee responses, supported by direct quotes. Cost, transportation, and oral health literacy were recurrent barriers reported by stakeholders, particularly aging veterans living in rural communities. The interviews also provided valuable insight into effective policy solutions, calling for increased funding of the Iowa Trust Fund and Medicaid expansion.



Section 5 summarizes conclusions of results generated from this report in plain language for each major area of analysis, including cost, overall health, and oral health.



Section 6 provides a detailed list of actionable, evidence-based strategic recommendations for key stakeholders to use to ignite systemic change for Iowa veterans.



Report Stakeholders & Target Audiences



Veterans +
Caregivers



Policymakers



Clinicians



Associations



Researchers



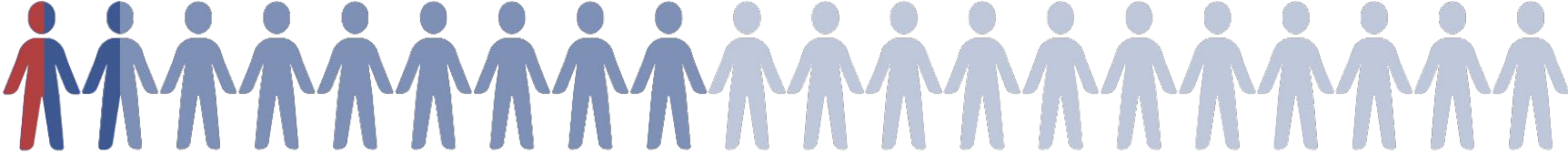
Insurers



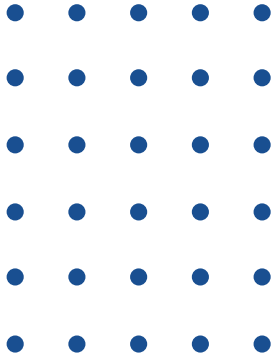
Results Overview

What is the state of veteran oral health in Iowa?

National Landscape

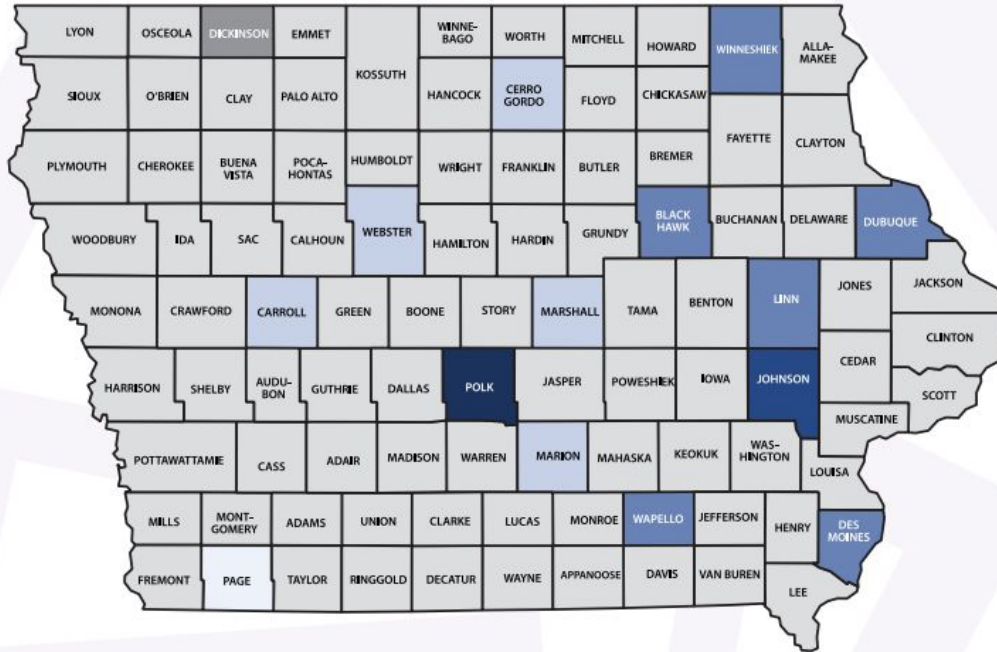


There are **18 million** veterans in the US. Of those, **9 million** receive healthcare from the VHA. Only **1.8 million** are eligible for dental care from the VHA, with just **582,000** receiving dental care.



Iowa Infrastructure

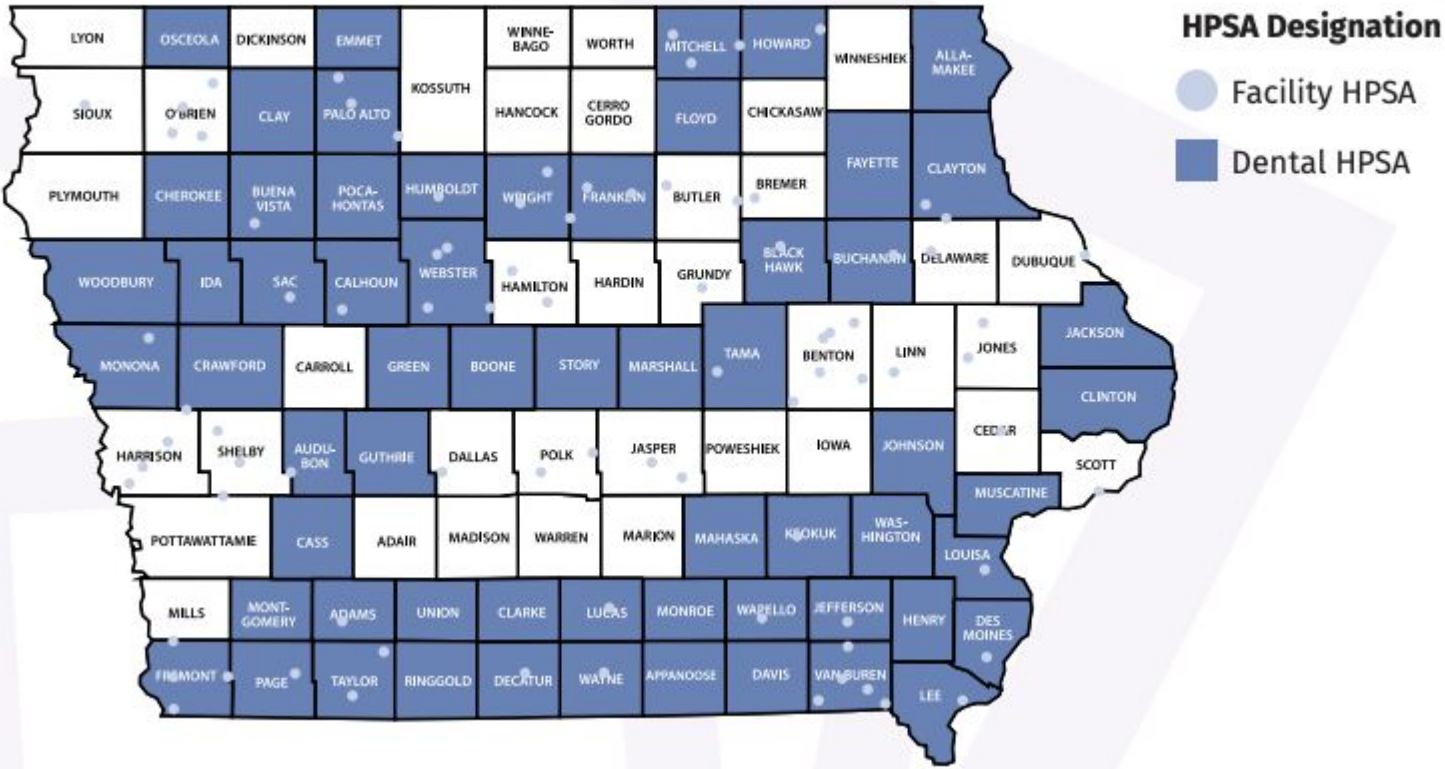
Figure 2: VISN 23 — Iowa Locations



- VA Central Iowa Health System, VA Medical Center
- VA Iowa City Health Care System, VA Medical Center
- Outpatient Clinic
- Outpatient Clinic
- VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System Outpatient Clinic
- VA Sioux Falls Health Care System Outpatient Clinic

Iowa Infrastructure

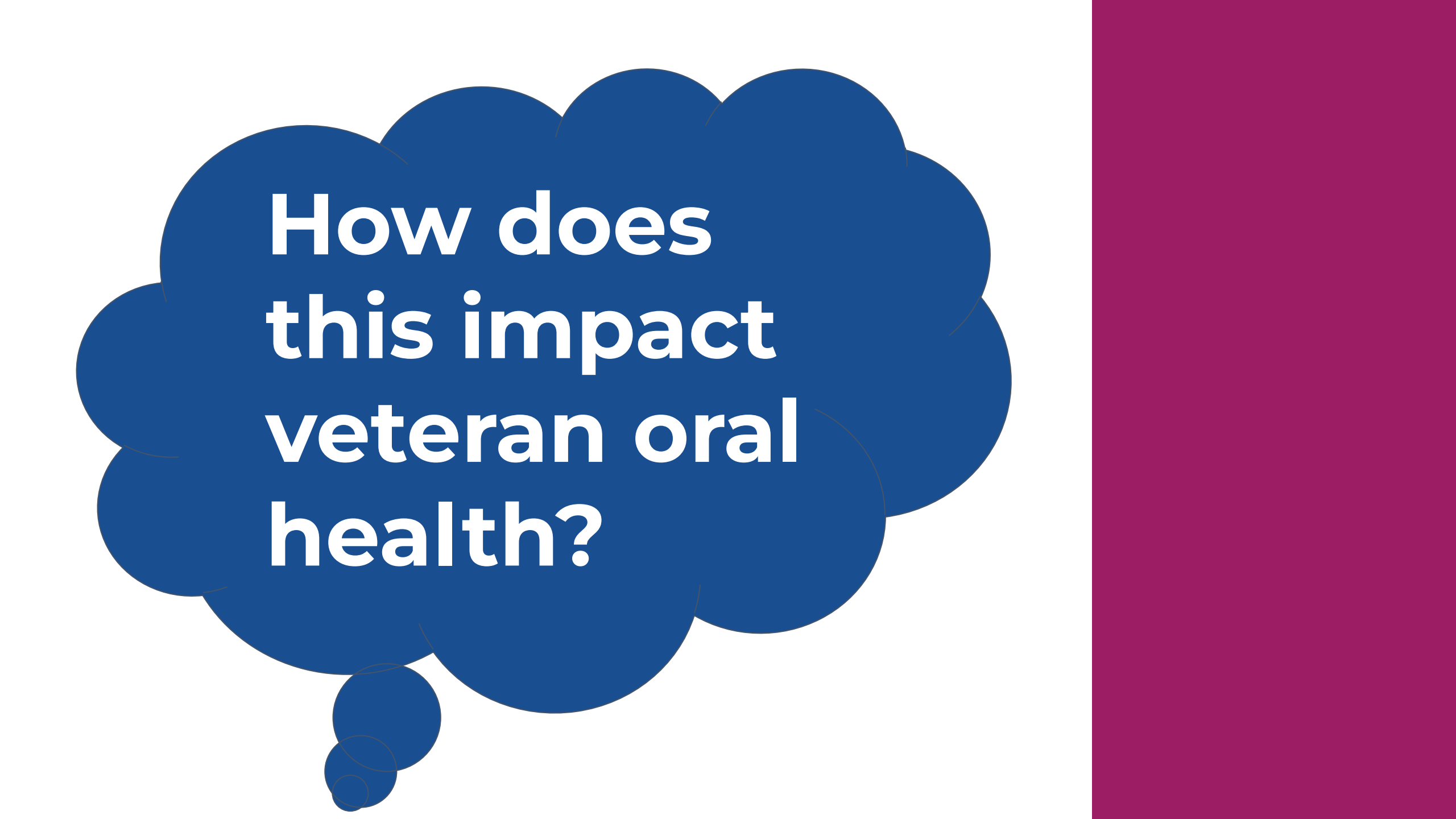
Figure 5: Iowa Federal Dental Health Care Shortage Designations



Key Takeaways

An overview of Iowa healthcare access and care delivery

- 1 There are many dental healthcare access points in Iowa for veterans; however, they are primarily located in urban areas.
- 2 Dental care coverage for many Iowa veterans is limited to Medicaid, VA, and charitable programs, creating potential financial barriers for veterans who are underinsured or do not have employer-paid dental coverage.
- 3 The full scope of veteran access within the available infrastructure is difficult to determine given the limited data and the lack of veteran status indicators collected within some healthcare systems.

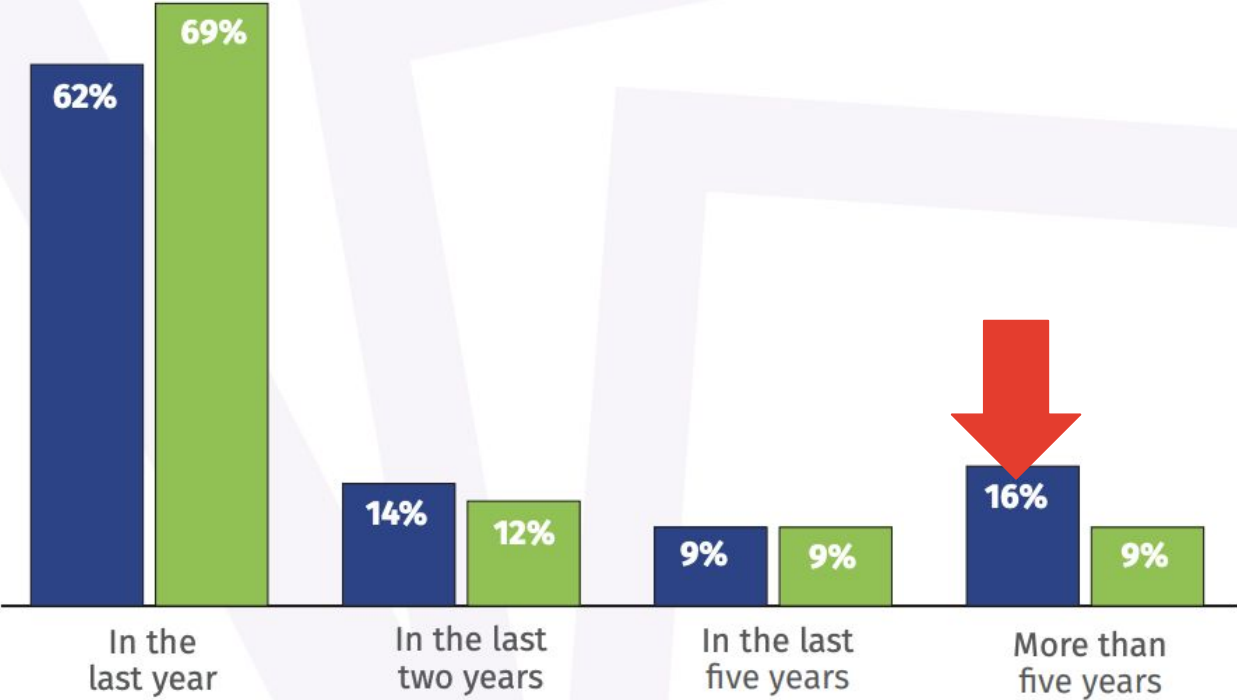


**How does
this impact
veteran oral
health?**

Veterans in Iowa See the Dentist Less Frequently

Figure 7: Oral Health Care Utilization by Years of Iowa Veteran and Nonveteran Populations

— Veterans
— Nonveterans



Tooth Loss is Higher

Figure 9: Percentage of Tooth Loss in Veteran and Non-Veteran Populations

— Veterans
— Nonveterans

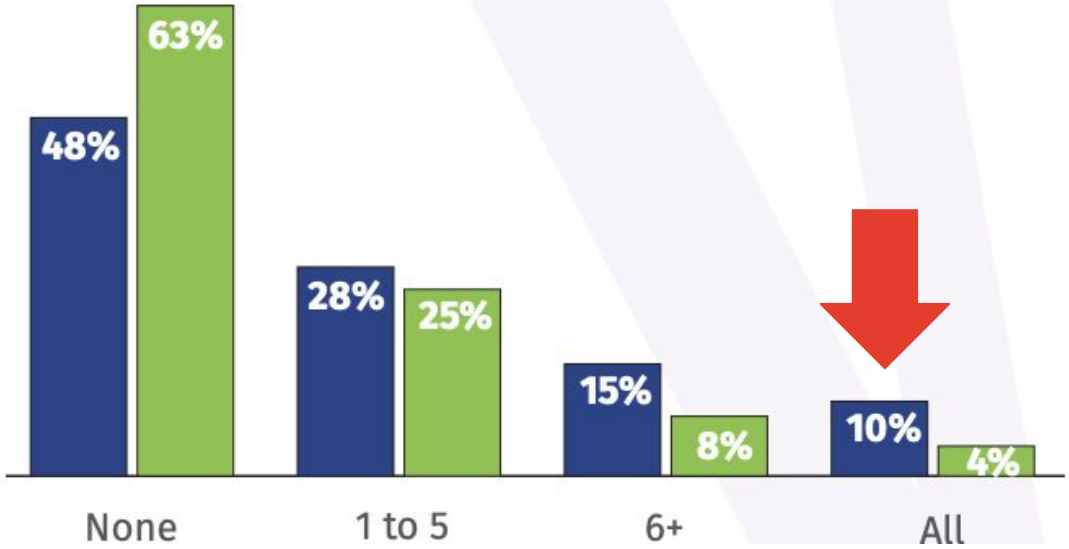


Figure 10: Percentage of Tooth Loss in Rural and Urban Veteran Populations

— Rural Veterans
— Urban Veterans




Tooth Loss is Higher

Key Takeaways

The oral health and well-being of Iowa veterans

- 1 Most oral health indicators show that Iowa veterans have poorer oral health outcomes
- 2 Indicators such as income, education, and age exacerbate those disparities; however, rurality is the largest driver of poor oral health among veterans.
- 3 Some veterans visit a dentist at similar frequency to nonveterans; however, the large disparities in outcomes such as edentulism suggest that optimal oral health is not being achieved through those visits.



**How does this
impact veteran
physical health?**

Iowa Veterans Have More Chronic Disease

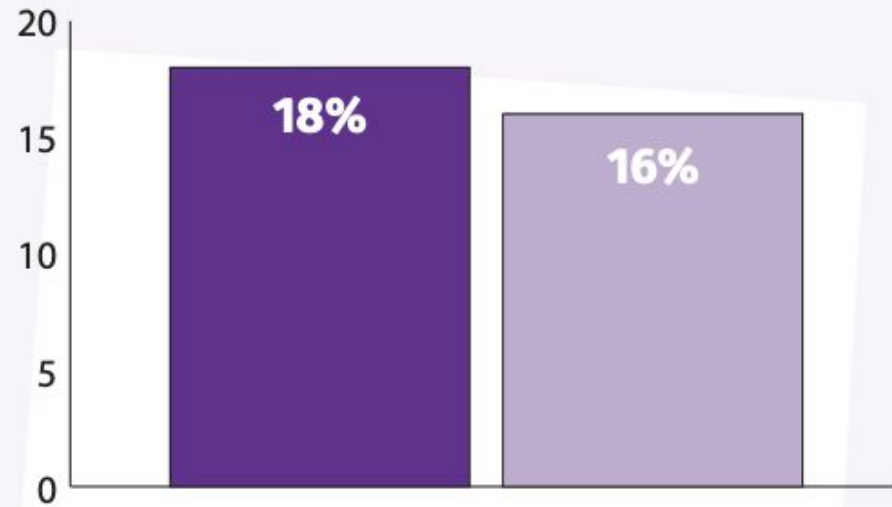
Figure 13: Prevalence of Diabetes by Iowa Veteran Status

— Veterans
— Nonveterans

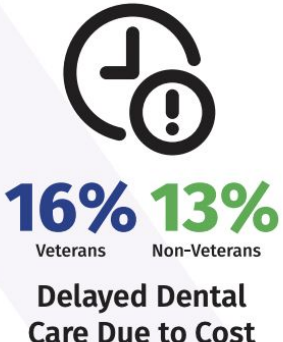


Figure 14: Prevalence of Diabetes by Rural and Urban Status

— Rural Veterans
— Urban Veterans



Addressing Dental Care Access Saves Money



\$55M **\$66M**

The VHA Can Save Millions By Providing Dental Care To Iowa Veterans With **Diabetes** and **Heart Disease**.



Policy & Advocacy for Iowa Veterans

Strategic Recommendations for Improving
Oral Health & Wellbeing

Fund and conduct a comprehensive clinical needs assessment for veterans living in Iowa.

Oral health disparities are prevalent — but more information is needed to inform strategies and tell the full story. Policy makers should consider ways to fund state health departments to work together in completing a clinical needs assessment, then implementing key findings to improve the oral health and wellbeing of veterans in Iowa.





Strengthen and expand the Iowa Veteran Trust Fund.

Every stakeholder interviewed for this report affirmed the importance of the Iowa Trust Fund and the gaps it fills in accessing dental services. Despite its value, many veterans who need help still do not meet eligibility requirements and therefore go without care. These veterans ultimately cost the system more through emergency department visits instead of accessing effective prevention. Policy makers should allocate more funding and expand eligibility criteria so more Iowa veterans can address their dental needs.



Expand Medicaid eligibility to include veterans.

Iowa veterans who live in rural communities, have diabetes, or have heart disease are among the highest risk for emergency department visits for an urgent dental need that could have been avoided through prevention and routine access to care. Expanding a dental benefit through Medicaid reduces the likelihood of complex medical conditions increasing to critical levels due to poor oral health access.



Iowa Public Health Tracking Portal

IOWA PUBLIC HEALTH TRACKING PORTAL

About Us

Explore the Tracking Portal

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and environn

[Learn about](#)

Health
Discover inform
illness and disea

Environment
Explore informat
environmental h

[Watch videos](#)

Add veteran oral health data to the Iowa Public Health Tracking Portal.

Iowa has a fantastic data resource in the Public Health Tracking Portal. This is an easy and user-friendly database with which to evaluate many different populations and health indicators; however, this database does not publicly track oral health indicators related to veterans. An expansion through this existing resource can increase the use of evidence-based recommendations and solutions for Iowa veterans.

Expand and fund telehealth and mobile dental resources in underserved areas.

Rural veterans are among the most underserved populations in Iowa. The inability to afford or source travel to dental care remains one of the most commonly indicated barriers. Leveraging both mobile dental program models and telehealth frameworks, and ensuring that funding supports those initiatives, can extend the current oral health workforce into these geographically underserved areas while effectively triaging care to the most affordable and efficient option.



Ready for Action?



Veteran
Advocacy



Educating
Stakeholders



Making Decisions



Seeking Funding



Your Turn to Share Out

You talk and we'll listen!

We want to hear from you!

1

How is policy shaping veteran oral health in Iowa?

2

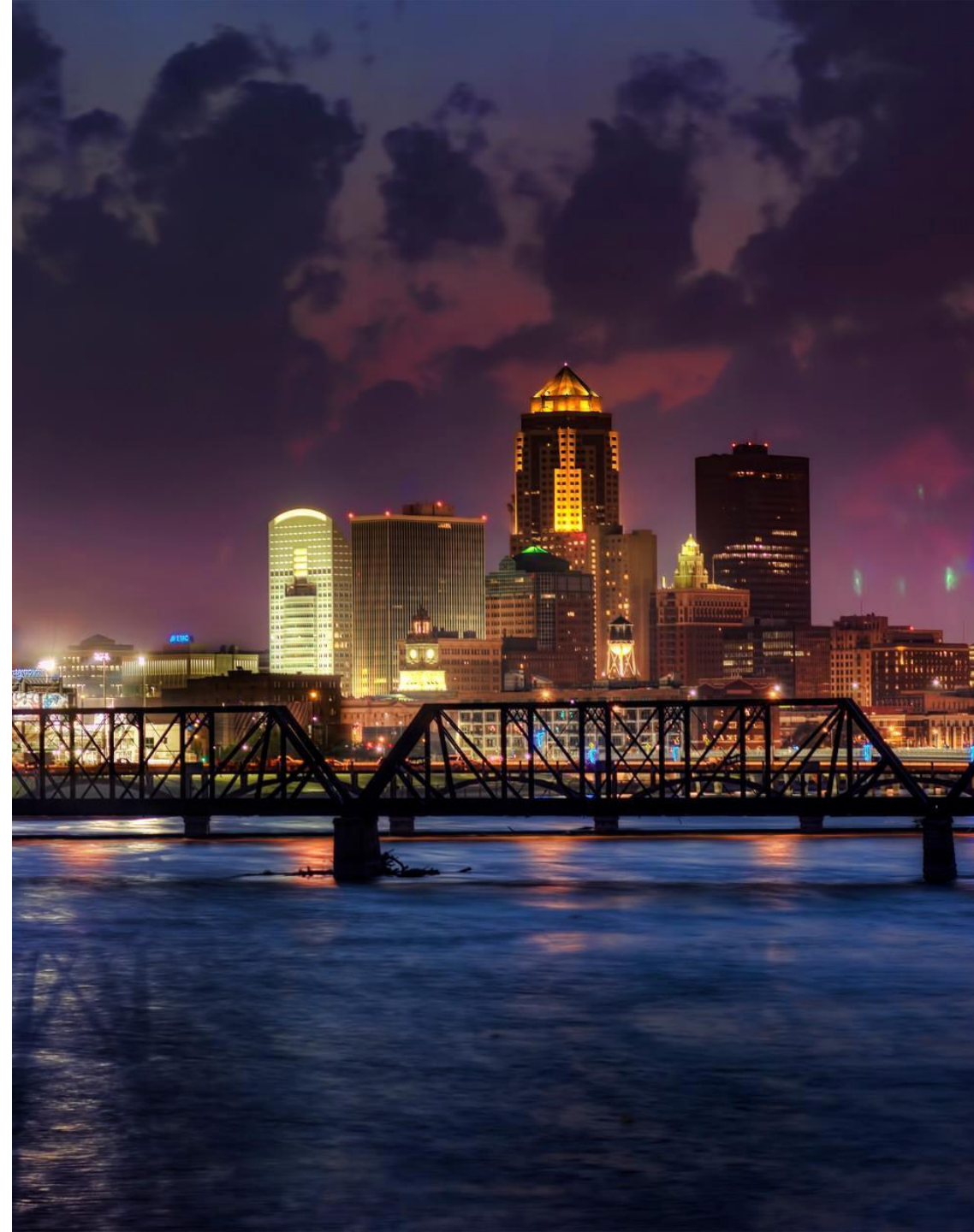
What policy areas do you feel most ready to tackle?

3

What policy solutions feel most important to address?

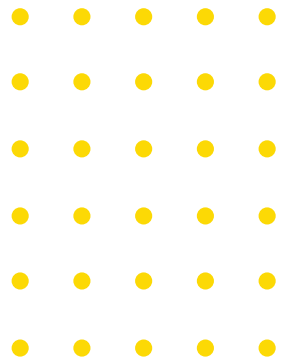
Join us in Des Moines Soon!

With support from Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation, AIDPH will be hosting an Iowa Veteran Oral Health Summit in Des Moines **August 13th, 2024**. The summit will feature tools, resources, and coalescing action to prepare for next steps.



Close & Next Steps

- Evaluations are **really important**—we'll use them to inform the summit agenda + areas of activation.
- CEUs are available—the **survey will show up immediately** in your browser at the end of this session.
- Please fill out the **summit interest form** so that you stay updated on logistics as they are confirmed.
- We'll add the **recording of this session + a summary** on the Iowa VOH page via the AIDPH website.
- Don't forget to join us for the **next sessions!**





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