

## Potential Barriers to Oral Health and Dental Care

Potential Barrier	Example
<b>Consumer Issues</b>	
Don't recognize need for dental care	Don't know signs/symptoms of dental disease
Knowledge of oral health	Don't recognize importance of baby teeth
Daily priorities	Too overwhelmed to seek dental care
Cultural discordance with dental providers	Feel uncomfortable and can't communicate well
Dental office environment	Not "child friendly" or staff appear insensitive
Don't know eligibility for services or benefits	Can't find information or it is confusing
Services difficult to access	No transportation, too far away, 8-5 schedule
Other costs associated with appointments	Time off work, child care and transportation costs
Geography and weather	Mountain passes, poor roads, snow and fog
Non-English language or low literacy levels	Problems finding and understanding information
Number of appointments needed	If can't do multiple appts, care is not completed
Inadequate financial coverage or high costs	Don't seek care or only seek emergency care
Anxiety or stress	Avoid care or present behavioral problems
Advanced disease or complex care needed	Specialists not available or too expensive
Seasonal laborers or temporary jobs	Can't predict schedule or location to make appt
Economic problems or fluctuations	Difficult to budget, pay for care or qualify for help
Dentists don't accept Medi-Cal or new patients	Can't find a dentist to provide care
<b>Provider Issues</b>	
Doesn't live in community	Doesn't know local resources or feel "connected"
Inexperienced with multi-cultural groups	Lack of credibility, recommendations not followed
New graduate or clinically inexperienced	Overwhelmed/frustrated by complex dental needs
Need adequate mix of income sources	Need adequate cash flow to pay expenses/overhead
Staff hiring and turnover	Difficulty finding qualified or long-term staff
Scheduling prevention vs treatment services	Treatment appts may overwhelm recall appt slots
Complex consumer needs and issues	More urgent care than comprehensive care
Lack of specialists in area	More complex care, inability to refer families
Equipment repair or replacement	"Down time" and expensive repairs
Paperwork and regulations for reimbursement	Confusing and time consuming
Licensure/insurance/economic issues	Inhibits providers moving from other states
Uncompensated or donated care	May be overwhelmed with requests
Consumer knowledge of oral health	Frustrated with apparent inattention to prevention

<b>Agency or Public Health Staff Issues</b>	
Consumer oral health knowledge/behaviors	High decay rates across generations in same family
Requests for help finding/financing dental care	Time consuming and not enough resources
Eligibility requirements	“Catch 2” situations; crossing county/state lines
Licensure/economic/cultural situations	Can’t attract/hire/retain dental providers
No specialists in area	Need for complicated referrals and transportation
Changes in oral health practices and resources	Difficult to keep current on advances and resources
Changing funding priorities at agency or state	Funding for dental services varies
Proximity of dental resources	No dental or dental hygiene schools in the area
Dentists won’t accept Medi-Cal/Healthy Families	No providers for many families
Families don’t follow-up on appointments	Wastes staff time and creates frustration/burn-out