

Oral Health – Data Brief

2012 Vermont Behavioral Risk Factor Survey

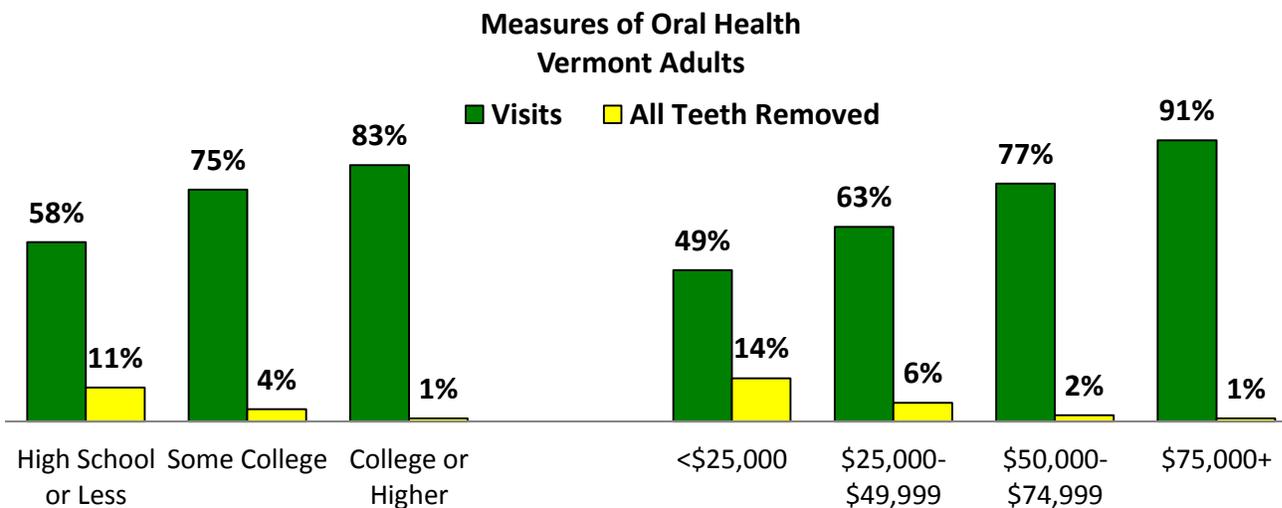
Background

Good oral health is essential to general health, well-being, and means much more than just healthy teeth. Oral health can be linked to someone’s risk for diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and other health conditions. Good oral health also supports the ability to carry out basic human functions such as chewing, swallowing and speaking^{1,2}. Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System data from 2012 allows us to look at oral health among Vermont adults.

Oral Health

In 2012, eight in ten (80%) Vermont adults said they have a regular provider for dental care. However, only seven in ten (71%) saw their dentist for any reason during the previous year. Forty-three percent of Vermont adults had any of their teeth extracted due to tooth decay or gum disease and six percent reported having all of their teeth removed.

Socio-economic status is correlated with visits to the dentist and teeth extractions. Adults of lower socio-economic status, as indicated by education level or annual household income level, are significantly less likely to have visited a dentist and significantly more likely to have had all their teeth extracted, than those of higher socio-economic status levels.



Dental visits also differ by gender, as women are significantly more likely to have visited a dentist than men (74% vs. 66%). Also, as might be expected, differences by age for having all teeth extracted are statistically significant. Nearly two in ten, 18%, of adults 65 and older reported having all teeth extracted, compared with six percent of those 45 to 64 and one percent of those 18 to 44.

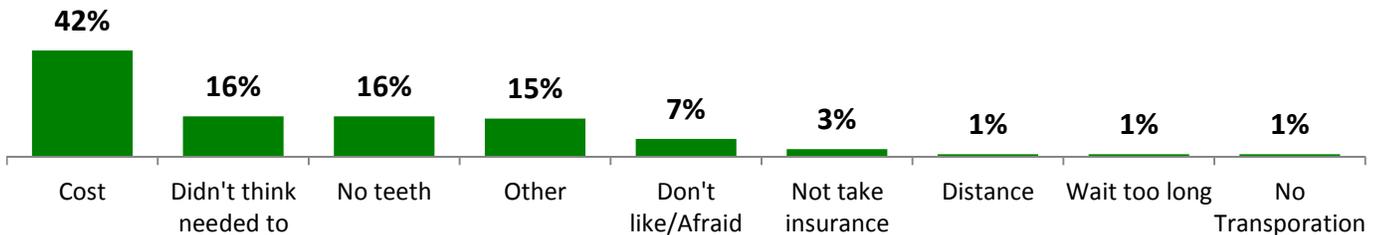
¹ Oral Health Program, Vermont Department of Health: http://healthvermont.gov/family/dental/documents/oral_health_plan.pdf

² US Department of Health and Human Services. *Oral Health in America: A Report of the Surgeon General-- Executive Summary*. Rockville, MD: US Department of Health and Human Services, National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, National Institutes of Health, 2000.

Reason for Not Visiting Dentist

In 2012, those adults who had not visited a dentist in the last year were asked the reason why not. Given the correlation with socio-economic status, it is not surprising that cost was by far the most frequently cited barrier to dental visits (42%). This was followed by one in eight who each reported they didn't think they need to go to the dentist or because they have no teeth.

**Reason Didn't Visit Dentist in Last year
Vermont Adults**

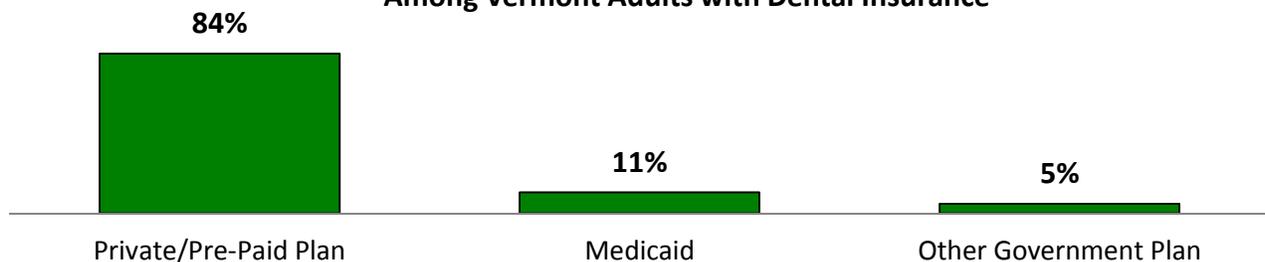


Dental Insurance

While about nine in ten Vermont adults said they have some type of medical insurance in 2012, less than six in ten (56%) have any dental insurance.

Among the 56% of Vermonters with dental insurance, more than eight in ten said it was a private or pre-paid insurance plan. Medicaid was reported by 11% and one in twenty said they have some other type of government dental insurance plan.

**Type of Dental Insurance Coverage
Among Vermont Adults with Dental Insurance**



The Vermont Department of Health, in collaboration with the Vermont Oral Health Coalition, updated its Oral Health Plan in 2014 (http://healthvermont.gov/family/dental/documents/oral_health_plan.pdf). The plan identified six priority areas for 2013-2018:

- Literacy and education
- Prevention strategies
- Surveillance and assessment
- Oral health infrastructure
- Financing and delivery systems
- Grow the oral health workforce

Goals within each of these areas are identified, and can be found starting on page four of the Oral Health Plan.

For more information on the BRFSS or to suggest ideas for future BRFSS Data Briefs, contact Jessie Hammond, M.P.H. (Jessie.Hammond@state.vt.us).

For more information about the Oral Health Program at the Vermont Department of Health, please go to: <http://healthvermont.gov/family/dental/services.aspx> or contact Martha Friedman, MPH at Martha.Friedman@state.vt.us.