

Oral Health Questions to Ask Your Candidate

One way to ensure candidates are thinking about oral health is to ask them questions about their positions on oral health policies. Asking candidates such questions helps to not only raise the issue but also ensures that oral health remains a part of the conversation once they are elected.

Some opportunities to voice your question(s) include town halls, forums, written questionnaires, or even conversations with candidates who knock on your door. The responses to these questions can then be disseminated through the media and social media coverage of these events, expanding their public reach.

Because oral health is often an overlooked issue, one of the most effective ways to get candidates to pay attention to your question(s) is to partner with other organizations hosting forums or circulating questionnaires. For example, organizations such as AARP and the League of Women Voters often host forums and develop voter guides that are widely disseminated. Inserting one or two relevant questions about oral health into these sorts of broader discussions may help your issue get traction.

The following are some sample questions you can ask to help start a conversation about oral health.

Questions for Candidates at Any Level

- » Many [insert Americans or state name] face barriers to good oral health, including lack of access to dental insurance, unaffordable care, shortages of oral health providers, and others. Poor oral health is linked to many other diseases and medical conditions, and even lost school and work hours.

How would you improve access to oral health services or eliminate barriers to these services in our communities?

- » Many [insert Americans or state name] are concerned about the high and rising cost of their health care, and dental care is one of the health needs that Americans are least able to afford. In fact, affordability is the main reason that people cannot get the oral health care they need to stay healthy and pain free.

How do you believe we can help people afford oral health care, including care to prevent or fix dental problems?

Questions for Candidates in Congressional Races

- » Millions of seniors and people with disabilities do not have oral health coverage to help them afford the care they need to stay healthy, maintain a nutritious diet, and live pain free. Medicare does not currently cover dental services.

How would you address the lack of Medicare dental coverage for seniors and people with disabilities?

- » Medicaid is a vital source of health and oral health coverage for millions of children, pregnant women, people with disabilities, and adults. Efforts to cut or restructure the program would put this coverage at risk.

How will you work to keep the Medicaid program strong so that it can provide health care coverage for those in need?

Questions for Candidates in State Level Races

- » [Insert state name] does not currently include adequate dental coverage for adults in Medicaid/[insert state program name]. Oral health coverage helps keep people healthy, can help them better manage chronic diseases like diabetes and can reduce the use of costly emergency room care.

How would you improve access to oral health care so that fewer people rely on emergency rooms to meet their dental emergencies?

- » [Insert state name] currently includes fairly comprehensive dental coverage for adults in Medicaid/[insert state program name], which helps keep people healthy, can help them better manage chronic diseases like diabetes, and can reduce the use of costly emergency room care. Some state legislators have proposed cutting this coverage.

How would you protect and improve oral health coverage for adults in [insert state program name]?

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