



Dental care in Kentucky: More adults insured, fewer delay care due to cost

The 2018 **Kentucky Health Issues Poll (KHIP)** asked Kentucky adults several questions about their dental insurance coverage and routine dental care. KHIP is sponsored by Interact for Health and the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky.

6 in 10 Kentucky adults have dental insurance, up from 2012

Dental health is an important part of overall health. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), oral diseases disable or cause chronic pain for millions of Americans each year.¹ Oral health problems include tooth decay, gum disease, tooth loss, oral cancer and several chronic diseases.² Dental insurance can help patients pay for dental services and obtain preventive dental care.

KHIP asked, "Do you have dental insurance of any kind?" Six in 10 Kentucky adults (60%) reported that they did. This is higher than in 2012, the last year KHIP asked this

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2015). *Oral Health - Oral Health Basics*. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2mnDjpa>.

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2016). *Oral Health - Adult Oral Health*. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2dxMTVS>.

Percentage of Kentucky adults who have dental insurance



SOURCE: 2018 Kentucky Health Issues Poll (released February 2019)



question, when 5 in 10 Kentucky adults reported that they had dental insurance (48%).

Responses varied by income. In 2018, 4 in 10 Kentucky adults whose household income was 138% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG)³ or less (41%) reported that they had dental insurance. That compares with more than 7 in 10 Kentucky adults with income greater than 200% FPG (73%).

Most adults have had dental visit in past year

KHIP asked, "How long has it been since you last visited a dentist or dental clinic for any

³ In 2017, 138% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG) was \$33,948 for a family of four; 200% FPG was \$49,200, for a family of four.

reason?" About 6 in 10 Kentucky adults reported that they had seen a dentist at least once in the past year (59%). This has remained steady since KHIP first asked this question in 2012 (61%). National data from 2016, the most recent year available, show that 66% of adults reported that they had visited a dentist within the past year.⁴

KHIP also found that adults who had visited a dental clinic within the past year were more likely to have dental insurance rather than not have insurance. Among adults who had gone to the dentist

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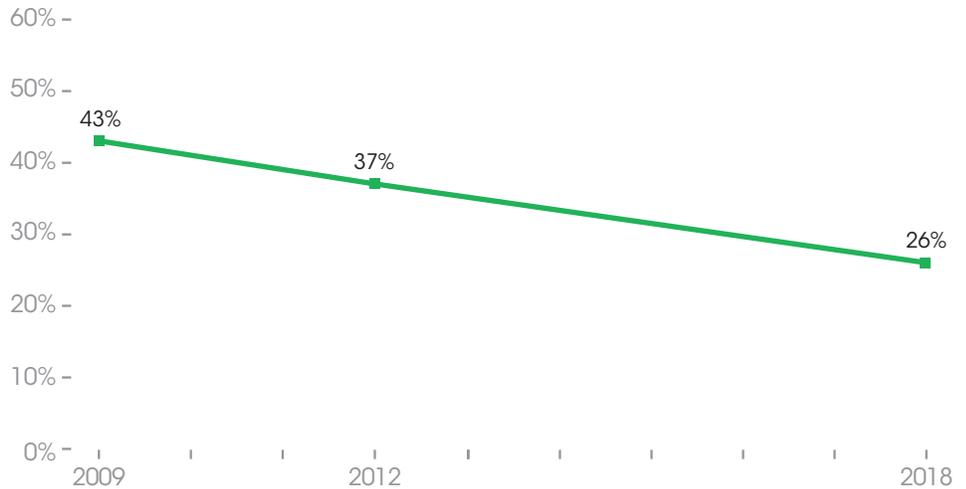
⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2016) Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System - Prevalence & Trends Data. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/brfss/brfssprevalence/>.

within the past year, 73% had dental insurance and 27% did not. In 2012, 63% of adults who had seen a dentist in the past year had dental insurance. That compared with 36% of adults who had no dental insurance.

Fewer Kentucky adults delaying dental care due to cost

KHIP also asked, “In the past 12 months, was there a time when you or another member of your household needed dental care but did not get it, or delayed getting it because of the cost?” In 2018, fewer than 3 in 10 Kentucky adults (26%) reported that they had gone without or delayed dental care due to the cost. This has improved since KHIP asked the question in 2012 (37%) and 2009 (43%).

Percentage of Kentucky adults who delayed dental care due to cost in the past 12 months



SOURCE: 2018 Kentucky Health Issues Poll (released February 2019)

