

Adding Dental to Medicare Part B: 31 Million Low-Income Enrollees Would Gain Access to Medicare Coverage

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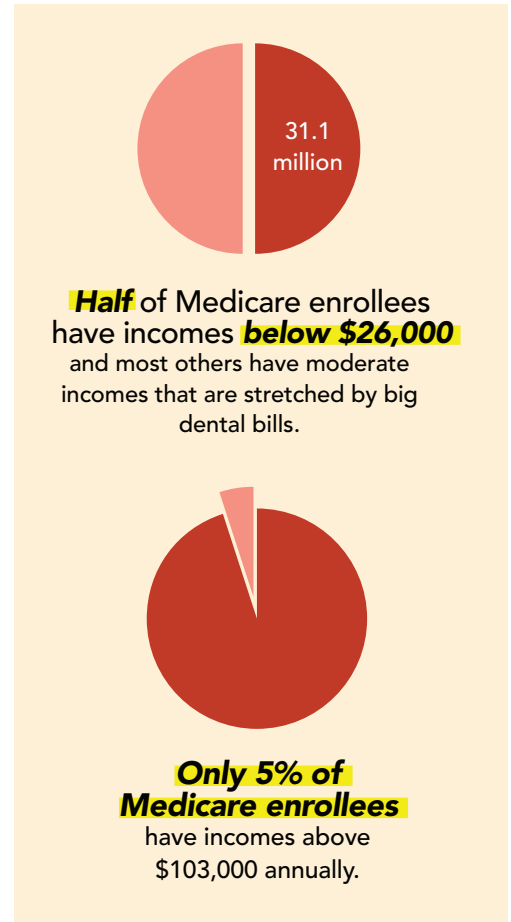
Adding a dental benefit to Medicare Part B¹ would provide access to all 61 million enrollees in the program. Half have incomes below \$26,000 and most others have moderate incomes that are stretched by big dental bills. Only 5% have incomes above \$100,000. Medicare dental coverage particularly would help the millions with low incomes who are disproportionately people of color.

Half of People with Medicare Have Incomes Below \$26,000

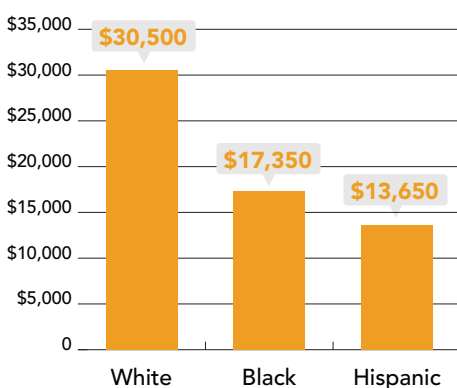
Half of Medicare Enrollees or 31.1 million older adults and people with disabilities have an annual income below \$26,200.² 15 million or 25% of Medicare enrollees have an annual income below \$15,250. Only 5% of Medicare enrollees have incomes above \$103,000 annually.

Medicare Enrollees of Color Are Most in Need of a Dental Benefit

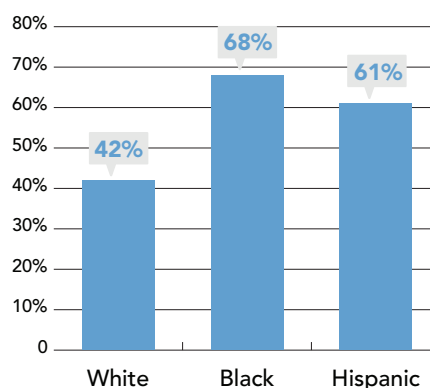
The annual income of Medicare enrollees of color is significantly below that of white Medicare enrollees due to ongoing and historic racial discrimination.³ They are also less likely than white Medicare enrollees to have visited a dentist in the past year⁴ and have worse oral health outcomes.⁵ Adding a dental benefit to Medicare Part B would help to address these inequities in access to coverage and care.



Median Per Capita Income of Medicare Enrollees by Race/Ethnicity



Percent of Medicare Enrollees Who Did not Visit a Dentist in the Past Year by Race/Ethnicity



Endnotes

- 1 Justice in Aging, "Creating an Oral Health Benefit in Medicare," Jan. 2019, available at <https://justiceinaging.org/our-work/healthcare/medicare-and-medicaid/oral-health/>.
- 2 Kaiser Family Foundation, "Income and Assets of Medicare Beneficiaries, 2016-2035," Apr. 21, 2017, available at <https://www.kff.org/medicare/issue-brief/income-and-assets-of-medicare-beneficiaries-2016-2035/>.
- 3 Kaiser Family Foundation, "Income and Assets of Medicare Beneficiaries, 2016-2035," Apr. 21, 2017, available at <https://www.kff.org/medicare/issue-brief/income-and-assets-of-medicare-beneficiaries-2016-2035/>.
- 4 Kaiser Family Foundation, "Medicare and Dental Coverage: A Closer Look," Jul.28, 2021, available at <https://www.kff.org/medicare/issue-brief/medicare-and-dental-coverage-a-closer-look/>.
- 5 Justice in Aging, "Adding a Dental Benefit to Medicare: Addressing Racial Disparities," Oct. 2019, available at <https://www.justiceinaging.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Addressing-Oral-Health-Equity-by-Adding-a-Dental-Benefit-to-Medicare.pdf>.