

Talking Points: Individuals with Special Health Care Needs

The Virginia Oral Health Coalition strives to ensure that all Virginians – regardless of age, race or ability – have access to affordable, comprehensive health care that includes oral health. Your voice is essential to making this vision a reality. Please consider using the talking points below to contact your representatives and ask them to improve access to dental care for Virginians with special health care needs.

Find Your Representatives

[U.S. Congressional Representatives from Virginia](#)

[Virginia General Assembly Representatives](#)

Main Points to Emphasize

- Adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities are particularly at risk for gum disease and tooth decay¹
- Disabled individuals account for 19% of Virginia’s Medicaid population, second only to children in low-income families²
- Virginia Medicaid only covers emergency dental services for adults (21 and over); Medicare has no dental coverage
- Research reveals that many adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities need some sort of behavioral assistance, like sedation, to undergo a dental procedure³
- There are more than 8,800 adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities living in Virginia

¹ IOM (Institute of Medicine) and NRC (National Research Council). 2011. Improving access to oral health care for vulnerable and underserved populations. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

² Department of Medical Assistance Services, 2013

³ Morgan, J et al. (August 2012) The oral health status of 4,732 adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. *J Am Dent Assoc*, 143(8), 838-846.