

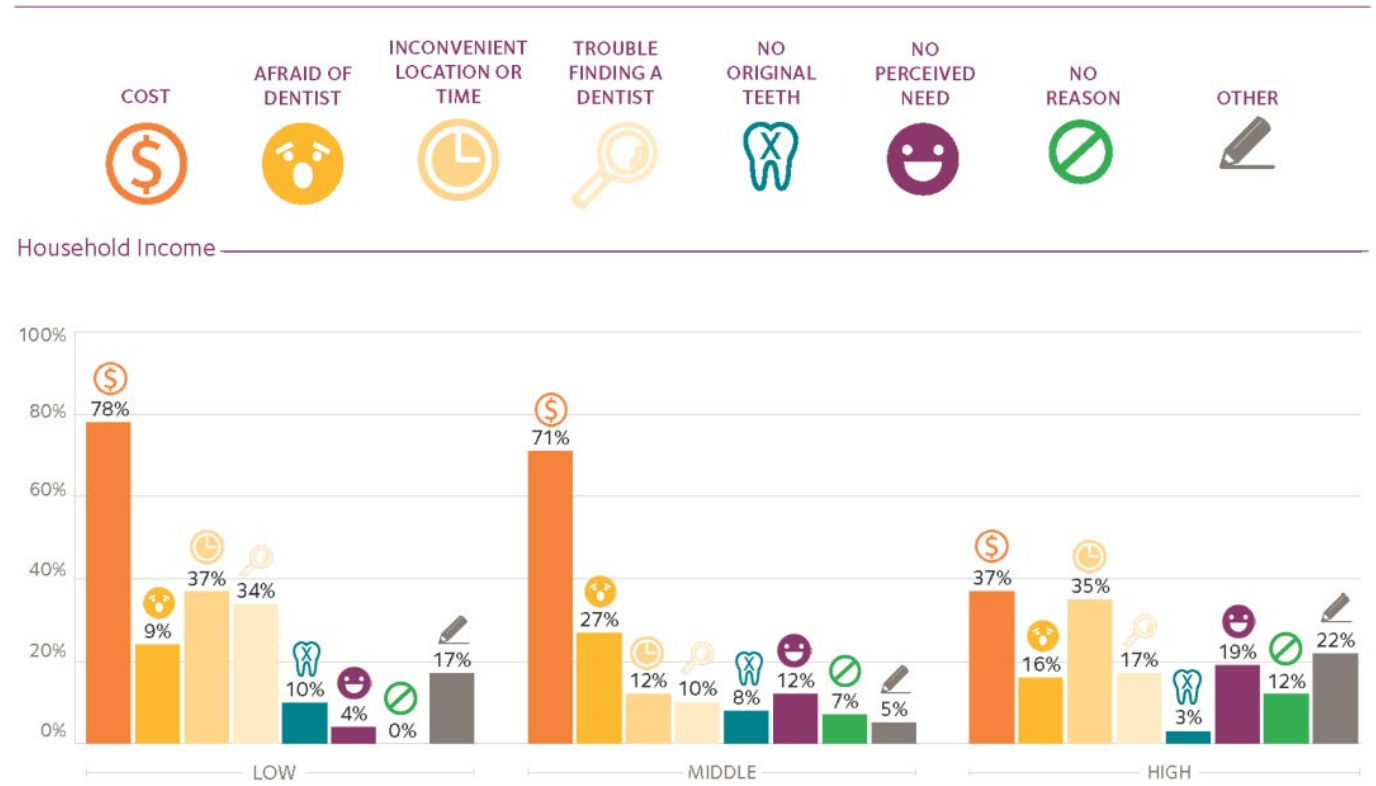
# BRIDGING THE GAP: ENHANCING ORAL HEALTH SERVICES AND POLICIES IN ARIZONA

Scott Howell DMD, MPH  
Arizona Rural & Public Health Policy Forum  
February 7, 2024

# Current Oral Health Opportunities

<https://www.azdhs.gov/documents/prevention/womens-childrens-health/oral-health/2019-2022-state-oral-health-plan.pdf>

**FIGURE 5: REASONS FOR NOT VISITING THE DENTIST BASED ON HOUSEHOLD INCOMES**

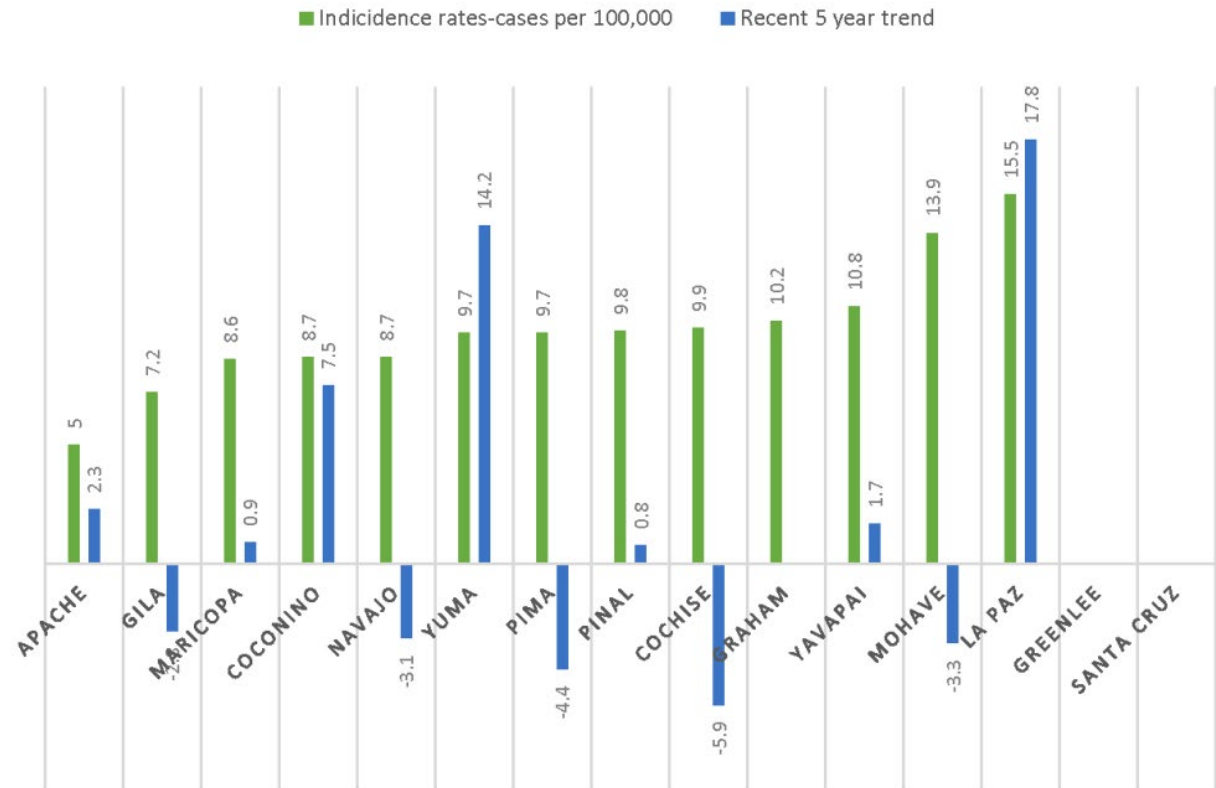


American Dental Association Health policy Institute- Oral health and well-being in Arizona 2015.<sup>(9)</sup>

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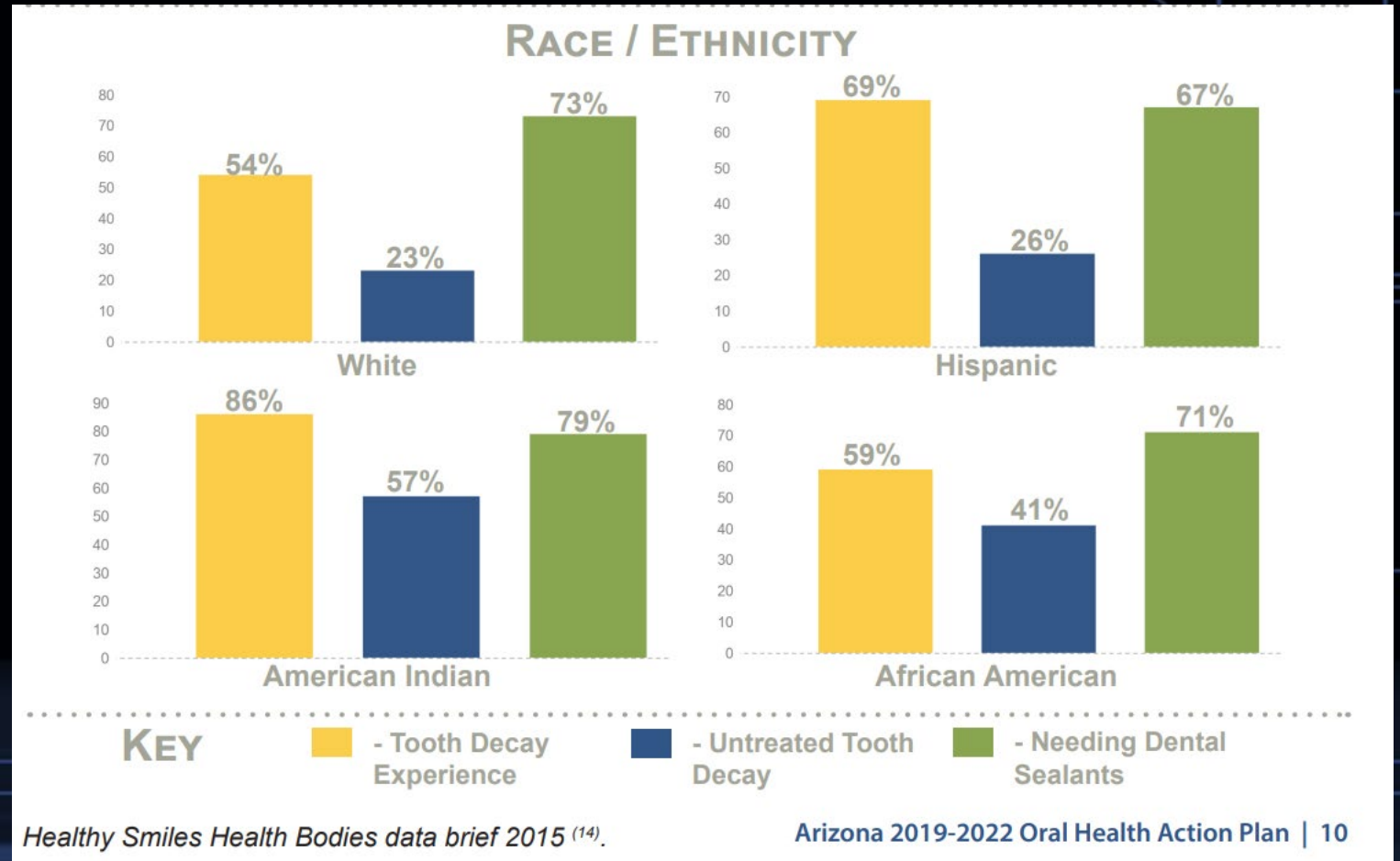
**FIGURE 6: ORAL AND PHARYNGEAL CANCER INCIDENCE RATES FOR ARIZONA BY COUNTY**



CDC: State Cancer Profile, National Cancer Institute 2015<sup>(20)</sup>

# Current Oral Health Opportunities

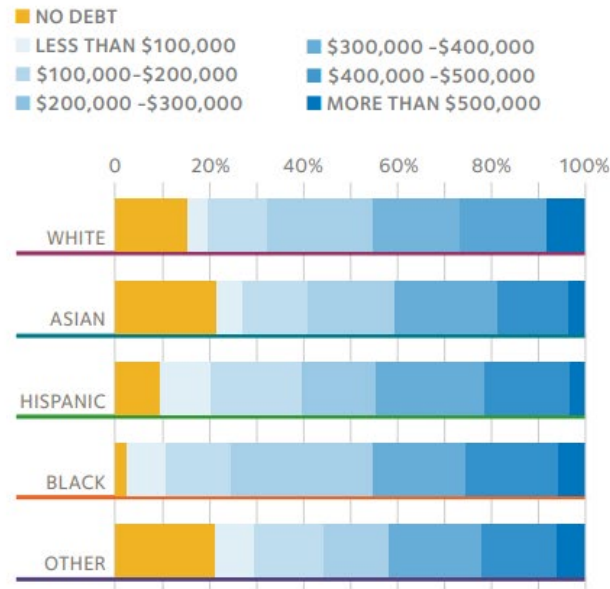
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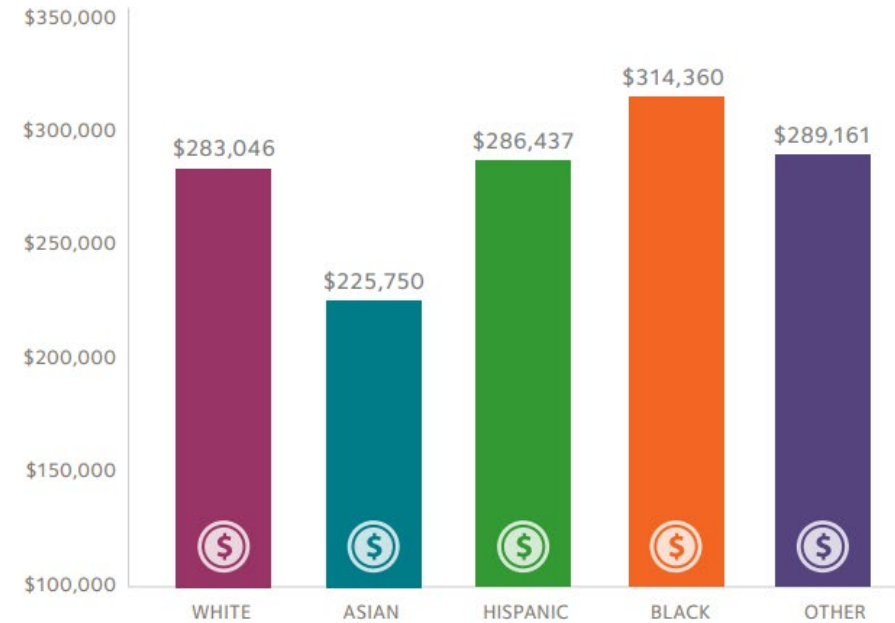
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**DISTRIBUTION OF EDUCATION DEBT LEVELS AT GRADUATION, 2019 GRADS**



Source: ADA Health Policy Institute analysis of data from the American Dental Education Association.

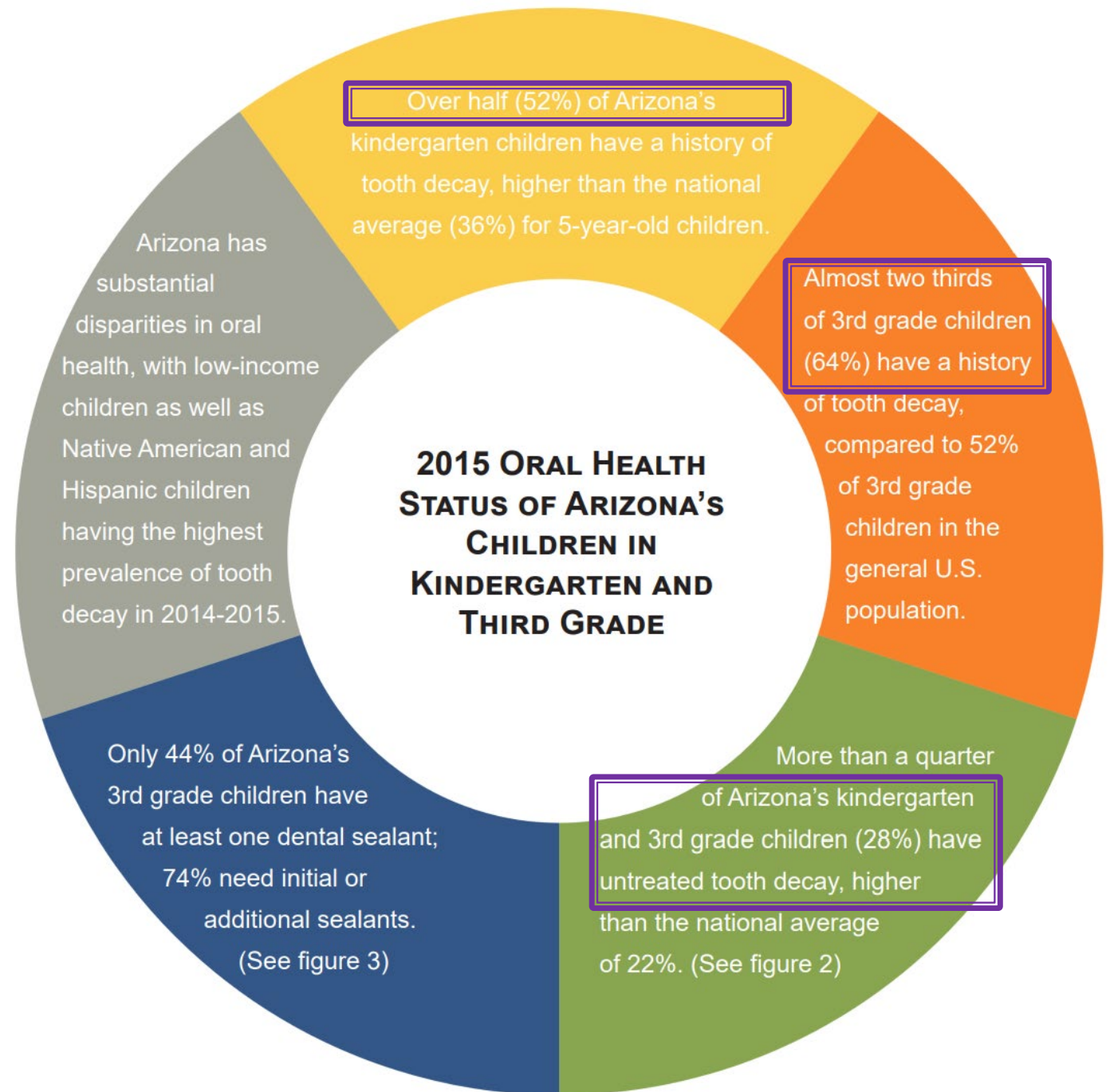
**AVERAGE EDUCATIONAL DEBT AT GRADUATION, 2019 GRADS**



Source: ADA Health Policy Institute analysis of the Survey of Dental Graduates and ADA masterfile. Includes responses where zero debt was indicated. Excludes responses with values greater than \$1 million to limit skewing.

# Current Oral Health Opportunities

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# Current Policies – AHCCCS and CHIP

- AHCCCS coverage for kids for most dental needs
- CHIP coverage with \$10-70 monthly premiums
- AHCCCS coverage for adults (21+) capped at \$1000 for medically necessary emergency only
- ALTCS coverage for adults (21+) capped at \$1000 for medically necessary dental care

# Medically Necessary Services

- “Those covered services provided by qualified service providers within the scope of their practice to prevent disease, disability and other adverse health conditions or their progression or to prolong life.”
- <https://www.azahcccs.gov/Resources/Downloads/ContractAndPolicyDictionary.pdf>



# Current Policies - Medicare

- “The dental services payment exclusion doesn’t apply, and Medicare can pay under Part A and Part B, when dental services are inextricably linked to the clinical success of other Medicare-covered procedures or services.”
- Pre-organ transplant
- Pre-head and neck cancer treatment
- Trauma to the jaw
- <https://www.cms.gov/medicare/coverage/dental>

# Policies under consideration

- SB1037 – Expand adult dental benefits

# Recent(ish) Policies

- Dental therapy
- Medicare rules
- Teledentistry

# Dental Therapy

- 2018 law passed
- 2023 rules finalized and individuals can apply for licensure
- Alternative pathway into the oral health field

# Medicare Rules

- 2023
  - Prior to organ transplant surgery (no longer just renal transplant)
  - Prior to cardiac valve replacement of valvuloplasty procedure
  - Prior to Medicare-covered treatments for head and neck cancer treatments

# Medicare Rules

- 2024
  - To address dental or oral complications *after* head and neck cancer treatment
  - Prior to or at the same time as cancer treatment using chemotherapy, chimeric antigen receptor T-cell therapy, and high-dose bone-modifying agents (antiresorptive therapy)

# Teledentistry

- Law allows exams, consultations, and care coordination
- AHCCCS only reimburses for emergency exams

# Teledentistry at A.T. Still University

- Connect a hygienist in the field at juvenile detention with dentist at dental school
- Dental residents meet with patients on Zoom
- Research planned to use teledentistry to connect rural and medically underserved urban health centers with oral pathology specialists
- Research planned to compare remote patient monitoring to m-Health technologies



# Where we are missing the mark

- Adult dental benefits
- Teledentistry policy limits and misunderstandings
- Dental therapy misunderstandings, misinformation, and legislative poison pills
- HPV vaccinations
- Student loans

# One thing you can do right now

- Sign up for the AZ Oral Health Coalition Newsletter

<https://azohc.us17.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=bce456bf4d022ce6595d097c1&id=0bcbbb8304>



# Questions and Contact information

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