**Dental health is vital to overall health**

**WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?**

- Nearly half of all adults in NC have had at least one tooth removed due to tooth decay or gum disease, a trend that has remained unchanged since 2008.
- 15% of NC kindergarteners have untreated tooth decay (2016).
- Every year, over 600,000 adults in NC lose all of their teeth because of tooth decay or gum disease. That's more than 2 times the population of Durham.
- More than half of local health departments in NC do not offer dental treatment and four health departments have ended dental services since 2013.

**SOURCE:** NC Center for Health Statistics BRFSS Annual Survey Results, 2008-2016; Kids Count Data Center, 2016; Local Health Department Staffing and Services Summary, 2013-2017; OBXSM, 2016.

**WHAT ARE THE CONDITIONS IN NC?**

**Improving the level of investment in public health** ensures that more North Carolinians can access dental care. Dental health in North Carolina is supported by Medicaid funding and state public health dollars allocated towards oral health preventative services.

- **Share of Medicaid dollars spent on dental services in NC, 2017**
  - Dental Services: 3%
  - All other services: 97%

  **SOURCE:** NC DHHS, 2010-17

- Since 2012, NC has invested 27% less in oral health preventative services.
- Only 3.1% of NC Medicaid dollars go towards dental services.
- Medicaid dollars spent specifically on child dental services have decreased by nearly half since 2010.

**WHY TREATMENT MATTERS**

- **Investments in dental health enhance quality of life.**
- **ADULTS:** Strong dental health keeps adults connected to the workforce because there are fewer barriers to securing a job when adults have all of their teeth.
- **CHILDREN:** With good dental health, kids can focus on learning instead of painful dental conditions.

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