OPEN

OPEN DAY OF ACTION: RAISING THE PROFILE OF ORAL HEALTH IN THE CONTEXT OF THE 2020 ELECTION

| PARTICIPANT GUIDE

September 2, 2020
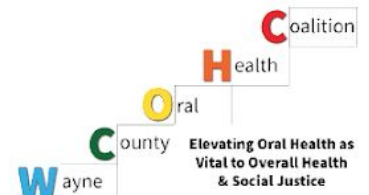
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Here is a link to the 9/1/2020 Take 30 Kick-off recording.

Here is a link to the slides from the Take 30.

BACKGROUND

Join the Oral Health Progress and Equity Network (OPEN) on September 2nd for a Virtual Day of Action, an opportunity to engage with candidates in the 2020 election.

Why a virtual "Day of Action?"

- Raise the profile of oral health in the context of the 2020 Election
- Help candidates understand the need to address oral health in their commitments to health care

Why is this election year critical?

- 2020 Election could be huge for health care at both state and federal levels
- Opportunities for Medicare, Medicaid, and other approaches to expanding coverage
- Now is time to lay groundwork for new champions

What issues will the Day of Action focus on?

- Adding dental coverage to Medicare
- Protecting Medicaid Adult Dental Benefits
- Securing funds for oral health

How to participate. Pick one or several of the following virtual activities:

- Join the Kick-off meeting on Sept 1 at 3pm EST: https://meetings.ringcentral.com/j/8684655884
- Email your Candidates
- Join the Twitter Chat @ 2pm ET
- Share your story on social media
- Commit to hosting a virtual gathering
- Complete "Ready, Set, VOTE" template

Have any questions? We're here to help!

- Bianca Rogers: bianca.n.rogers@gmail.com
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- Patrick Willard: willard.patrick@gmail.com
- Colin Reusch: creusch@communitycatalyst.org
- Grace Linn: glinn@openoralhealth.org

EMAILING YOUR CANDIDATES

In a virtual world, one of the best ways to contact your candidates is via email. We want to know where candidates stand on our issues. Follow these steps to email your candidates to request a short meeting or to share information on the importance of oral health.

Decide which candidates you want to contact

- Federal Senators & Representatives for Medicare, Medicaid & Oral Health Funding issues
- State Senators & Representatives and Governors for Medicaid issues

Find your candidates' campaign contact information. There are a couple of ways you can do this:

- Sample Ballot Lookup on Ballotpedia offers information on candidates. Enter an address for a Congressional district to find links to social media for candidates & their campaign websites

  - Look for a contact email or form or phone number for the campaign office.

- The Federal Election Commission keeps official statements filed by federal campaigns on candidates and campaign officials. Here is how to access the information:

  - *Visit the Federal Election Commission website at FEC.gov and follow these steps:*

    1. Click on "Campaign finance data," then "Find elections."
    2. Enter your zip code or filter by state and district.
    3. You'll be able to click on Senate and House races to see who is running in your district.
    4. Choose the race you're interested in, then click the name of the candidate.
    5. Click on "About this candidate" in the menu on the left.
    6. Click on the "Statement of candidacy" PDF.
    7. This PDF should include a mailing address. Some include email addresses as well. Once you have the names of all the candidates, you can Google their website. Every candidate worth talking to will have a website, and the website should include information on how to contact the candidate and where you can interact with them online, either through virtual town halls or social media.

  - *Share informational one-pagers with candidates:*

- ➢ [Protect our Older Adults](#): Medicare specific, attach this one in your email to progressive candidates

- ➢ [Let's Give American Workers Their Money's Worth](#): Medicare specific, attach this one in your email to conservative candidates

- ➢ [Why Oral Health is Critical Now](#): focuses on oral health & COVID-19, attach this one to any email

- ➢ To Add your logo to these one-pagers in time for the Day of Action, upload it here by Friday morning (8/28) & log back in on Monday (8/31) to download: https://spaces.hightail.com/space/aVEMPAIjjK

On September 2nd send one of these emails:
Informational email template

Hello [Contact's name],

I'm a constituent from [state and/ or city] and am writing to ask [candidate's name] position on oral health policies.

I represent [name of your organization] as well as the Oral Health Progress and Equity Network (OPEN), a national network of over 2,000 people working to ensure that all of our communities can thrive without being held back by oral health problems.

[Optional: Insert state-specific oral health data]

There are several policy solutions that could improve our communities' oral health and overall health, as well as reduce healthcare costs such as adding dental coverage to Medicare, protecting Medicaid Adult Dental Benefits and securing federal funds for oral health programs.

Without dental coverage under Medicare, we are leaving older adults susceptible to a wide array of health issues, including many that get worse and end up costing Medicare more later. I have attached an informational one-pager for your reference. [attach appropriate one-pager] **Does [candidate's name] believe Medicare should include dental coverage? If not, what is their plan for Medicare beneficiaries to get dental care?**

Medicaid is a vital source of health insurance for millions of children, pregnant women, people with disabilities, and adults, but many states do not include adequate dental coverage in their programs. The COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately hurt families who rely on this coverage, and their health and employment prospects are made all the worse when they cannot get oral health care. Yet, many states are considering *cutting* oral health coverage due to looming budget deficits at a time when people need it the most.

Does [candidate's name] support making dental coverage a guaranteed service in Medicaid so families can receive the critical care they need to work, eat and stay healthy?

The COVID 19 pandemic has strained oral health providers and state oral health programs' to the point that many cannot provide the care that our communities need. Oral health is critical to overall health and well-being, as well as a key factor in people's ability to get—and keep—a job. Investing in state and local oral health programs would support safety net and school-based dental care, data collection, and access to personal protective equipment so that providers can safely deliver dental care. **Does [candidate's name] support providing adequate funding for oral health programs that promote improved health and economic recovery in [your state]?**

Thank you and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,
[Your name]

Request a meeting email template

Hello [Contact's name],

I'm a constituent from [state and/ or city] and am writing to request a virtual meeting with [candidate name].

I represent [name of your organization] as well as the Oral Health Progress and Equity Network (OPEN), a national network of over 2,000 people working to ensure that all of our communities can thrive without being held back by oral health problems.

[Optional: Insert state-specific oral health data]

I hope to discuss policy solutions that could improve our communities' oral health and overall health, as well as reduce healthcare costs. Please let me know when [candidate's name] is available to speak with me for 15 minutes over a video call and if your team has a preferred video conferencing platform. If [he/she] is unavailable, I welcome a meeting with the staff member overseeing health policy. Thank you.

Sincerely,
[Your name]
[If others are attending, list of advocates attending and their organizations]

Preparing for your meeting:

Know your issues. Review the policy priorities you want to raise with candidates. You can use the Questions to Ask Your Candidates Guide as a starting point, and the 2020 Medicare Dental Guide if you plan to do a deep dive on Medicare oral health issues.

Know your audience. Establishing a relationship with candidates and their teams is a long-term investment. Getting to know them - both as a politician and a person - is key to creating a collaborative relationship. Research them thoroughly before your meeting, including any public positions or votes on issues you plan to raise. Also be sure you know what office they are running for, if you are a constituent, and what their key priorities are.

Determine your objectives. What are you asking the candidate to do? What are some concrete steps you'd like them to take or metrics you want them to meet? Outline your asks for the meeting ahead of time and make sure that if you are doing this with a team, you are all aligned on how to present information to the candidate.

Organize materials to leave behind. Candidates and their teams are pressed for time and meet with multiple groups every day. Providing a resource that summarizes your talking points, objectives and contact information will help keep them informed and allow them to follow up with you (feel free to steal any of the leave behinds from the Day of Action Google Drive or OPEN Hill Day materials for this!).

PARTICIPATING IN THE TWEET CHAT at 2 pm ET

Join our Tweet Chat to raise the profile of oral health in the context of the 2020 election, and help candidates understand the need to address oral health in their commitments to health care.

- Find your candidates' *campaign* Twitter handles
    - TIP: For those who are currently in office, their official twitter account lists them as 'Rep. XX' or 'Senator XX'-- **don't** use this account!

Co-sponsors
- OPEN: Oral Health Progress and Equity Network @OPENoralhealth
- Families USA @FamiliesUSA
- Community Catalyst @HealthPolicyHub
- Oral Health Kansas @OralHealth_KS
- DentaQuest Partnership for Oral Health Advancement @DentaQuest
- Virginia Coalition of Latino Organizations (VACOLAO) @VACOLAO
- S. Fitch Consulting, LLC
- United Health Organization
- Wayne County Oral Health Coalition

Hashtags
#oralhealthvotes and **#mouthsmatter**

Link to high quality Graphics for twitter:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1WIXXo2AHnlmRCqBYr8g5kDXSxiLqCrZw?usp=sharing

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Twitter Chat Questions & Sample Answers
Here are the chat questions that will post during the hour (new one every ten minutes). Please also use the sample tweets below to highlight data and challenges around the connection between oral and overall health and why oral health is more critical than ever.

Remember to include **#oralhealthvotes** and/or **#mouthsmatter** in each tweet and to include your candidates' campaign twitter handles whenever appropriate.

2:00pm ET Welcome

Welcome to @OPENoralhealth Virtual Day of Action Twitter Chat! To join the conversation over the next hour, please use hashtags #oralhealthvotes and #mouthsmatter.

2:05pm QUESTION 1
Why is oral health an important issue to you as an advocate?

Sample Answers:
#Oralhealth is a #health issue, an economic issue, & an #equity issue. Without it, millions of people in America cannot stay healthy, secure employment, or even eat. A healthy, strong country relies on expanding policies to support oral health. #mouthsmatter

Improving access to #oralhealth care is a wise use of scarce resources. It would help people better manage chronic disease & reduce #COVID-19 risk. Our country would avoid paying for costly care for basic needs, and at the same time prevent death, keep people healthy. #mouthsmatter

Health is about the whole body, including the mouth. Yet, millions of people in America cannot get the oral health care they need. Our current environment has put oral health care even further out of reach for many who already struggle to afford it. We can, and must, do better. #mouthsmatter

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2:10pm QUESTION 2
What impact does COVID-19 have on oral health?

Sample Answers:
#Oralhealth is directly related to #COVID-19 outcomes, and COVID-19 patients with poor oral health tend to get sicker and are more likely to die. This is particularly true in communities oppressed by systemic racism and economic instability — often the very communities that COVID-19 has hit hardest. #mouthsmatter

Now is the time to act. #COVID-19 has shown the risks and costs when underlying chronic conditions, like diabetes and heart disease, are exacerbated by oral health issues. #oralhealthvotes
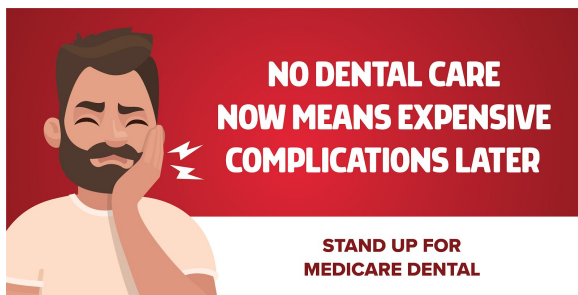
For many Americans, oral health care is simply too expensive & out of reach. This is particularly true in the very communities that #COVID-19 has hit hardest. The very same people who would benefit the most from improved oral health have been most likely to get sick and to lose jobs during the pandemic. http://bit.ly/actnoworalhealth #mouthsmatter

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2:15pm QUESTION 3
What policy solutions are critical for addressing oral health?

Sample Answers:
Our health care system needs help — and part of that help is providing care early for the entire body, including the mouth, to avoid expensive complications later. #mouthsmatter
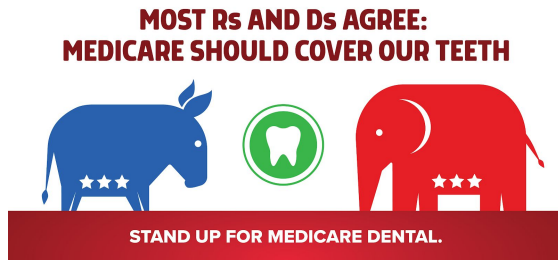

American workers contribute to Medicare all their working lives. So shouldn't #Medicare cover their whole body -- including their mouth? #oralhealthvotes
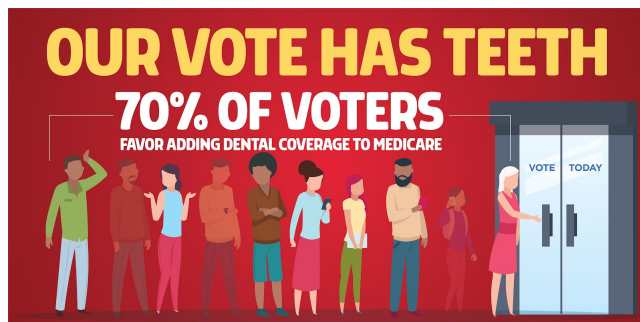
Most Americans now keep their teeth well into old age. But Medicare still does not routinely offer dental coverage. Americans of all ages, across the political spectrum, now say it should -- that's most Republicans, most Democrats, most liberals and most conservatives. http://bit.ly/oralhealthpoll

Polling shows 7 out of 10 Americans favor creating a coverage system that treats oral health and overall health as one in the same. Members of Congress can each determine their preferred solution. But ignoring the issue will not make it go away. http://bit.ly/oralhealthpoll

2:25pm Midway Reminder

We're midway through our Virtual Day of Action Twitter Chat (2-3 PM EST)! Keep the momentum and conversation going about the importance of oral health during the 2020 elections using #oralhealthvotes and #mouthsmatter

2:30pm QUESTION 4
Why is now a critical time for advocates to raise their voices?

Sample Answers:
The #2020election will determine the 2021 policymakers, who will shape the future of #oralhealth policies. Candidates are listening now, and advocates can shape their agendas in ways that might not be possible after the election. #oralhealthvotes

In the midst of a national health and economic crisis, policymakers and candidates are confronted with huge challenges. As they develop plans to drive our country toward improved

health, a stronger economy, and racial equity, we cannot let them continue to overlook and undervalue oral health. #oralhealthvotes #2020election

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2:40pm QUESTION 5
What is your state doing to encourage safe voting? Early voting? Mail Inballots? More voting sites?

Sample Answers:
Each state's election office maintains information about election laws and registration requirements. The National Association of Secretary of State's https://bit.ly/3lmNucX includes information on what states are doing to respond to #COVID-19. #oralhealthvotes

Nonprofit Vote has a national map on state vote by mail and absentee ballot rules at https://bit.ly/2QtehWy or @NpVOTE #voteready #oralhealthvotes

The first states to accept ballots in the 2020 general election will be MN, SD and WY which begin Early Voting on 9/18. The New York Times has a guide to dates for Early and Absentee voting deadlines https://nyti.ms/32uz0Ph #oralhealthvotes

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2:45pm QUESTION 6
What's one oral health question you would like to ask your candidates? (Remember, include your candidates' twitter handles to direct the question to their campaign twitter account)

Sample Answers:
#Oralhealth is critical to staying healthy, getting and keeping a job, and affects a person's #COVID-19 risk. As part of your plans to support economic recovery and improved health amidst the pandemic, how would you improve access to oral health services in our communities? #oralhealthvotes

Many Americans are concerned about the cost of their #healthcare, and #dental care is one of the health needs that Americans are least able to afford. How do you believe we can help people afford #oralhealth care, including care to prevent or fix dental problems? #oralhealthvotes

Millions of ppl in America cannot afford the oral health care they need to stay healthy, eat, work, and live pain free. #Medicare does not currently cover dental services. Do you support including dental coverage in Medicare for our nation's seniors and people with disabilities? #oralhealthvotes

#Medicaid is a vital source of health insurance for millions of families in the US but many states do not offer adequate dental coverage. Do you support making dental coverage a guaranteed

service in Medicaid so families can receive the care they need to work, eat and stay healthy? #oralhealthvotes

The #COVID-19 pandemic is straining oral health providers and state oral health programs' to the point that many cannot provide care our communities need. Do you support adequately funding #oralhealth programs that promote improved health and economic recovery in [your state]? #oralhealthvotes

How would you improve access to oral health care so that fewer people are forced to rely on emergency rooms to meet their #dental needs, driving up our state's health care costs?
How would you protect and improve #oralhealth coverage for adults in [insert state Medicaid program name]? #oralhealthvotes

2:55pm Close

Thank you so much for joining our Twitter Chat today! As we return to our work days, let's think about other ways we can keep the momentum strong to show #mouthsmatter during the 2020 elections.

Best Practices for Social Media Engagement

- Engage with your candidate on social media by posting directly to their Facebook or Instagram page, starting a conversation with them on Twitter or joining their Twitter chats.

- Ask them about their stance on adding dental benefits to Medicare and how they plan to ensure that their constituents have access to oral health.

- Use the hashtags.

- On Twitter, mention related accounts by using their handle starting with the @ symbol. Make sure the @ mention is in the body of the tweet; if it's at the beginning, the tweet becomes a direct reply to that account and will not show up on your Twitter feed.

- Keep it short. Remember, tweets are limited to 280 characters.

- A tweet thread can allow you more flexibility. After you create your initial tweet, open it and click on "Add another tweet." You can create a string of tweets on the same topic.

- Visual elements such as ready-made graphics to photos and graphics are an important tool in Twitter and Facebook posts.

- On Facebook, you can tag another page in your post by using the @ sign and selecting the account from the dropdown list (start to type the account name after the "@" sign to help make the name appear).

- Be engaged. Have someone monitor social media for opportunities to start or respond to conversations.

Basic Instructions for Twitter posts: Since this is a Tweet Chat we're encouraging using the "reply" function (click on the talk bubble bottom left) to share different ideas and perspectives around the question prompts. Or the "retweet"/"add comment" feature (click on the two arrow icon second from the left bottom) to include your response in the initial question.

1. *Find the Tweet you want to reply to.*
2. *Click or tap the **reply** icon*
3. ***Note:** A composer screen will pop up, where you will see the name of the person(s) you are directly replying to.*
4. *Type in your message and click or tap **Reply** to post it.*

For more information, see https://help.twitter.com/en/using-twitter/twitter-conversations

SHARING A VIDEO SHORT STORY

1. Think of an issue you would like to raise with your candidates.

2. Select a question to ask your candidates about that issue. Use this for inspiration: Oral Health Questions to ask your Candidates.

3. Pick an experience/story to share that illustrates the impact of your issue.

4. Write out your script.

5. Record a video of yourself on your phone or laptop (horizontal orientation works best).

6. Share on your social media on Sept. 2nd either during the twitter chat or at another time if you're unable to join the chat.

TIPS FOR RECORDING YOUR VIDEO

- Keep the video short! Two minutes or less

- Remember to state who you are and your constituency

- In addition to attaching the video to your post, type out your question to the candidate in the post's text.

- Tag the candidates' campaign twitter handles in the post

- Use hashtags #MouthsMatter and #OralHealthVotes whenever appropriate

HOSTING A VIRTUAL GATHERING

- **Convene Planning Meeting with partners**
  - Coordinate plans with coalition partners to leverage event
  - Check with League of Women Voters, AARP or other groups that host forums to learn about their plans
- **Pick Target Race/Campaigns**
- **Select Format and Platform for meeting**
  - Formats include Town Hall style event, Panel questions, Debate
  - Platforms can include Zoom, Facebook Live, YouTube broadcast
  - All formats should include a Moderator, Time Keeper, Chat Monitor and Tech Assistant
- **Invite Candidates/Campaigns**
  - All viable candidates in a race should be invited
  - Tell campaigns the expected audience, format and how the event will be shared
- **Promote Town Hall**
  - Make sure traditional media knows about the event
  - Use social media to highlight the event and invite participants
- **Prepare Remarks and Questions**
  - Make sure to maintain a nonpartisan tone to all remarks and questions
  - Determine if and how you will take questions from viewers at the event
- **Host Town Hall**
- **Promote Town Hall Outcome and Quotes**
  - Share video, quotes and press releases from Town Hall with media and on platforms
  - Evaluate the participation and logistics to share with partners
  - Follow up with campaign guests about event outcomes
- **Let us know if you plan to host a virtual gathering!** Fill out this form.

READY, SET, VOTE!

In order to assure safe voting in this year's elections, the Centers for Disease Control Prevention provided guidance for voters and election officials to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spread. In order to assist in safe voting, the following checklist can help citizens get ready to vote when they go to the polls.

Most of the answers to the questions posed below can be obtained from the local Election Commission. State Elections Commissions websites can be found at https://www.usa.gov/election-office. Nonprofits can share the information as Election Day gets closer to make sure voters are ready to vote.

Below is a checklist for the information you need to know to get ready for the election:

Registration

Are you registered to vote?
What is the deadline to register to vote for the November 2020 election?

Absentee Voting

What are the rules for absentee voting?
Do I need a reason to vote absentee?

Can I mail in ballots?

What are the deadlines for applying for a ballot?
What are the deadlines for mailing in ballots?

Can I vote early?

Do absentee voting rules apply to Early Voting?
What are the dates and hours for Early Voting?
Where are Early Voting sites?

What kind of ID do I need to vote?

Does the state require a photo ID?
What are the types of IDallowed to vote?

Election Day Voting

What are the hours polls are open?
What are the rules for Provisional Ballots?
Do you know your home precinct?
Is there a site for voting outside your precinct?
What is the phone number for the Election Commission in case there are questions on Election Day?

Now you're ready to educate others in your state on safe voting.

- Fill out this template to create an informational one-pager on voting in your state, then share with those in your community to spread the word on safe voting.

- Here's an example of **Tennessee** using the template.