



## Oral Health for Iowa Seniors

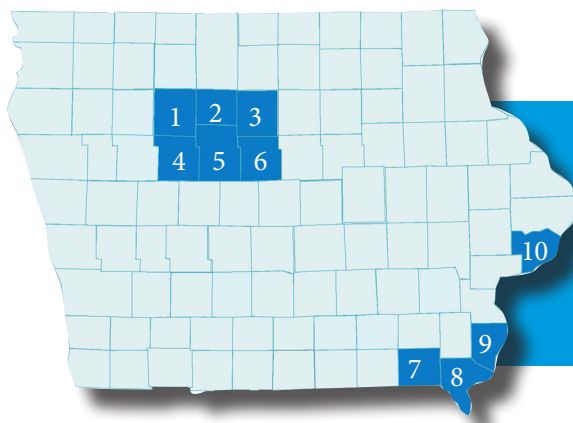
### The Condition of Older Iowans' Oral Health<sup>1</sup>

- One of every five feel that the condition of his/her mouth is fair to poor.
- 28% report that "very often" or "occasionally" he/she has pain in their mouth.
- Over one-third (38%) have not seen a dentist within the past 5 years.
- 36% must pay for dental care out-of-pocket.
- Nearly one-third have suspected tooth decay.
- 42% need treatment from a dentist.
- 26% have had all teeth removed.

### Older Iowans' Barriers to Accessing Dental Care

- 26% say they cannot find a dentist to treat them.
- 53% feel they cannot afford dental care.
- 13% are unaware they need dental care.

### I-Smile™ Silver 2016-2018



- |               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| 1. Pocahontas | 6. Hamilton   |
| 2. Humboldt   | 7. Van Buren  |
| 3. Wright     | 8. Lee        |
| 4. Calhoun    | 9. Des Moines |
| 5. Webster    | 10. Scott     |

### A Pilot Project to Help

The I-Smile™ Silver pilot project began in November 2014, designed to develop local systems that help older Iowans access oral health services and maintain overall health in Scott, Lee and Van Buren Counties. In November 2016, the project expanded to include seven additional counties: Des Moines, Calhoun, Hamilton, Humboldt, Pocahontas, Webster, and Wright. The project is managed by the Iowa Department of Public Health through contracts with Lee, Scott, and Webster County Health Departments.

The I-Smile™ Silver project is focused on Iowans age 60 and older, including those who are residents of nursing facilities, clients of the Medicaid Elderly Waiver program and those who receive home and community based services.

I-Smile™ Silver was created using successful, innovative strategies from the I-Smile™ dental home initiative for children. The contracted county health departments each have an I-Smile™ Silver coordinator, who serves as the community liaison for older Iowans and dental offices, nursing facilities, community organizations, businesses, and the local Area Agency on Aging offices.

<sup>1</sup> 2015-2016 Oral health surveillance data from Lee and Scott County Health Departments, >200 people surveyed.

## Testimonials from Older Iowans<sup>2</sup>

- My partial got dropped and is broken. I am unable to afford to have it replaced.
- I am unaware if I have dental insurance and currently attempt to eat without any teeth or dentures. Because of this, I often avoid eating foods that I otherwise would. It has been more than five years since I have seen the dentist, and the hygienist reports a lesion on my mouth that I should have examined.
- I would describe my mouth as in poor condition. I have occasional pain and often times I avoid eating certain foods. My biggest concern is a lack of money to pay for dental care. I am 58 years old.

## Contact Information

I-Smile™ Silver  
Iowa Department of Public Health  
1-866-528-4020



### Johnie: An Iowa Story

Johnie is a veteran who contacted Sarah, his local I-Smile™ Silver Coordinator, because his teeth caused him a lot of pain due to a chronic mouth infection. Johnie had a hard time eating and his pain impacted his overall quality of life. He had not seen a dentist in nearly ten years because he did not have dental insurance.

Sarah managed to coordinate his care with a local dental provider and assist him with enrolling in a dental insurance program for veterans.

Johnie is now receiving the dental care that he greatly needed and reports that his headaches and infections are no longer occurring.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.