

**It doesn't require  
engineering new  
medical technology**

**OR  
developing a  
breakthrough drug.**

**The way to save  
is known and  
attainable:**

**Make  
sure  
people  
receive  
dental  
care.**

**We've  
found a  
way to  
save  
billions  
in health  
care.**

All research prepared for the Dental Trade Alliance  
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## There is a proven link between oral health and overall health.

When neglected, oral infections can spread to the rest of the body.

When coinciding with systemic diseases, gum disease worsens illness.

As individuals receive regular dental care, their medical health improves—releasing vast savings back to the American health care system, government and businesses.

### Consider these cases.

**\$29**  
BILLION

#### DIABETES

Diabetes not only worsens in the presence of gum disease but also serves as a risk factor for gum disease.

If 60% of people with diabetes better managed their oral health, savings could equal close to \$29 billion per year.

**\$7**  
BILLION

#### PREGNANCY

Poor oral health can complicate pregnancy, contributing to gestational diabetes, preeclampsia and preterm birth.

If 40% of pregnant women received the benefits of oral care, thus avoiding the additional medical costs of gum disease, savings could equal approximately \$7 billion.

**\$5**  
BILLION

#### LUNG DISEASE

The mouth retains respiratory pathogens, so oral health affects lung health, especially for people with Ventilator-Associated Pneumonia (VAP).

If 50% of VAP patients received oral care, estimated annual savings could reach \$5 billion.

#### EMERGENCY ROOM VISITS

Many people wait until their dental pain becomes severe and end up in the ER, which is much costlier than care in a dental office.

If 50% of dental-related emergency room visits were handled in a community setting, the system could save around \$826 million.

**\$826**  
MILLION

#### ORAL CANCER

Routine dental visits help detect oral cancer early on, which can lead to less complicated treatments, lower costs and higher survival rates.

If 20% more oral cancer cases were detected early, estimated annual savings would range from \$338 million to \$495 million.

**\$495**  
MILLION

#### DENTAL SEALANTS

These coatings placed on the surface of teeth are a simple, effective way to prevent decay (and reduce spending on more involved care) among low-income children.

If 50% of these children benefited from dental sealants, savings could equal around \$101 million.

**\$101**  
MILLION

## Here's how we can promote the cost-effective power of oral care:

#### HEALTH CARE ORGANIZATIONS,

including insurance companies, can better integrate oral care into primary care as a core service.

#### POLICYMAKERS

can consider mandatory dental coverage to encourage regular care. They can redesign government programs to extend broader care to adults and children.

#### BUSINESSES

can ensure their employees are covered for oral health and establish wellness programs to encourage use of this coverage.

#### PEDIATRICIANS,

primary care physicians and dental hygienists can learn to deliver more extensive care, also exploring models such as virtual exams and community-based oral health centers.