



## 2024 Policy Priorities

The Arizona Oral Health Coalition (AZOHC) is dedicated to advancing local, state, and federal policies that will improve oral health for all. Additionally, AZOHC will support regional oral health coalitions to promote oral health through local advocacy efforts. We will take a leadership role in advancing state policies that have the potential to improve oral health status, access to oral health care, and address oral health disparities in Arizona.

To this end, AZOHC strives to promote creative policy solutions to systems-level challenges, to advocate for policies and practices that will promote oral health equity, to work towards integration of oral health services within the broader health care system, and to incorporate the perspective of payers, providers, and patients in all we do.

By critically examining data, rethinking payment structures and incentives, engaging providers, and mobilizing stakeholders toward action, we can create and sustain a culture of health in Arizona.

### 2024 State Legislative priorities:

- 1) Provide comprehensive and restorative oral health coverage to adult AHCCCS participants.** Oral health is essential to overall health. Access to preventive and comprehensive care is necessary to identify and treat dental issues early. Not only is untreated oral disease painful, but [it is associated with](#) conditions like diabetes, cardiovascular issues, pregnancy and delivery complications, poor mental health and self-image, substance use disorder, and pneumonia and other respiratory illnesses. [Research demonstrates](#) that providing oral health care coverage to adult Medicaid participants reduces both emergency department visits and overall health expenses. Furthermore, oral health care coverage can empower adults to get and keep jobs, leading to increased participation in the workforce. In short, comprehensive oral health care prevents pain, promotes overall health, and can save millions of dollars by preventing costly dental and medical problems. Investment in the oral health of all Arizonans will yield dividends - both for population health and the state budget.
- 2) Support evidence-based policy solutions that address risks to oral health and promote health equity.** AZOHC will support measures that would improve access to care and reduce health disparities, especially as they relate to oral health. This may include, but is not limited to, legislation that would: expand access to vaccines and other preventive health care; reduce food insecurity; improve environmental quality; and strengthen Arizona's enforcement, licensing, and regulatory standards for the sale of tobacco and vaping products.