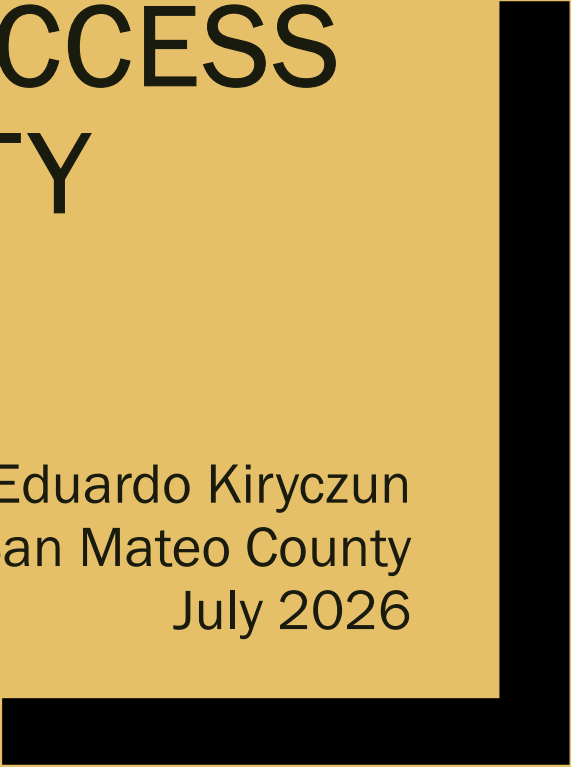




VETERAN'S DENTAL ACCESS IN SAN MATEO COUNTY

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ACCESSING DENTAL CARE IN SAN MATEO COUNTY

Dental care is one of the most significant unmet health care needs for veterans, particularly for those who are not eligible for comprehensive VA dental benefits.

Several factors contribute to the challenge:

1. **Most veterans are not eligible for VA dental care.** Eligibility is generally limited to veterans with specific service-connected dental conditions, those rated 100% disabled (or paid at the 100% rate through Individual Unemployability), or former POWs.
2. **Private dental insurance can be expensive.**
 1. *Retire before becoming eligible for Medicare.*
 2. *Lose employer-sponsored dental insurance.*
 3. *Find individual dental plans costly and limited in coverage.*
 4. *Delay preventive care because of out-of-pocket costs*

3. Medicare generally does not cover routine dental care

- Traditional Medicare does not cover:
- Routine cleanings
- Fillings Crowns
- Dentures

This creates a gap for older veterans who are no longer working but are not eligible for VA dental care.

4. Oral health affects overall health

Untreated dental problems can contribute to:

- Heart disease
- Diabetes complications
- Poor nutrition
- Chronic pain

Mental health concerns due to appearance or discomfort For veterans experiencing homelessness, dental issues can become a major barrier to employment and housing stability.

5. Safety-net resources are limited.

Programs such as:

- Health Plan of San Mateo Dental (through Medi-Cal)
- Samaritan House free dental clinics
- Community health centers
- Dental school clinics

These programs provide valuable services, but they often have:

- Eligibility requirements
- Waiting lists
- Limited appointment availability
- Limited specialty services

- Other issues include
 - Transportation
 - Access (Coastside)
 - Awareness
 - Periodic reporting requirements

Assessment

Based on local census data and broader US statistic, likely 10–20% of veterans (Potentially 1,600–3,200 veterans in San Mateo County) lack a realistic, affordable way to obtain needed dental care.

Access to dental care is an essential component of a veteran's overall health and well-being. By helping veterans obtain needed dental care, we can improve health outcomes, enhance quality of life, and address a critical gap for those who do not qualify for comprehensive VA dental benefits or cannot otherwise afford treatment.



QUESTIONS?

