

# Oral Health and Substance Use Disorder (SUD)

## Understanding the SUD & Dental Health Connection

Substance Use Disorder (SUD) often leads to neglect of self-care, resulting in severe oral health issues like broken, infected, or extracted teeth, which can lead to chronic pain and reduced quality of life. Poor oral health can exacerbate anxiety, depression, and self-esteem issues, making recovery from SUD more challenging. Pre-existing oral health issues can significantly impact SUD treatment and recovery. Dental complications may exacerbate compulsive symptoms of addictive behaviors and create a cycle of disparity in Social Determinants of Health (SDoH), leading to relapse, loss of employment, dropping out of school, isolation, justice involvement, or homelessness.

### Integrating Oral Health in Routine Care

Providers should regularly assess oral health as part of routine check-ups, recognizing that some behavioral symptoms may stem from poor oral health. Promoting preventive and restorative dental care is crucial. Encouraging regular dental check-ups and cleanings, along with educating members about maintaining good oral hygiene, can make a significant difference in health outcomes. Providers can include questions about oral health in initial and ongoing evaluations as well as collaborating with dental professionals to support a coordinated treatment approach. Educational outreach, such as providing materials and workshops on the importance of oral health, can further raise awareness.



### Addressing Oral Health in SUD Treatment

To address oral health in SUD treatment, harm reduction strategies should include providing clean oral hygiene supplies and education on minimizing substance use effects on oral health. Integration of oral health care into SUD treatment programs can emphasize overall health. Offering emergency referrals for dental services and supporting members with pain management strategies to encourage oral health care engagement are also key steps.

### Other ways to address Oral Health & SUD:

- Building rapport with members
- Coaching on oral health issues
- Utilizing resources for oral health care
- Sharing resources and support for comprehensive care

**For more information on this topic and other prevention, intervention and treatment tools visit [www.Bannerheath.com/bhpprovider-PIT](http://www.Bannerheath.com/bhpprovider-PIT)**