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AAE members may reprint this position statement for distribution to patients or referring dentists.

# Access to Care

## AAE Position Statement

### About This Document

Originally created by the Clinical Practice Committee in 2010. Reaffirmed in 2017. Revised by the Practice Affairs Committee March 2024. Approved by the AAE BOD April 2024.

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The American Association of Endodontists is dedicated to the highest standards of excellence in endodontic care. We support our members' pursuit of excellence through research and education, leadership and advocacy, and philanthropy and service.

- Many Americans experience significant access barriers to oral health care that negatively impact overall health, including losing teeth that could have been saved. According to the American Dental Association, Emergency department visits for dental health care cost three times as much as a visit to the dentist and studies have shown that the uninsured and Medicaid patients seek dental care in emergency departments more frequently than those with insurance. The most extreme cases of untreated dental infections have cost hundreds of thousands of dollars in hospitalization, and some have ended in tragic yet preventable deaths.
- Good dental care is important to overall health, yet creating better access to oral health care is a complex and vexing issue. It is influenced by regulatory (state and federal), socioeconomic and several other factors.
- The AAE supports advocacy efforts by the ADA and other dental organizations to expand access to dental care. We also support programs that provide fair payment to dentists providing that care through government programs. The AAE also encourages efforts to ensure that Congress continues to fund oral health research.
- Dentists provide a remarkable amount of charitable care, and endodontists are no exception. Endodontists provide charitable care endodontic services for the underserved in their offices, at local community clinics, at local access to care events and through mission trips. The AAE encourages all endodontists to provide charitable care. These charitable acts also help educate the public about the role of endodontists in saving natural teeth.
- In addition, in 2016, the Foundation for Endodontics expanded its mission to include providing access to endodontic care for underserved patients. The Foundation's goal is to provide volunteer opportunities and funding for international and domestic access to care projects undertaken by AAE members.

The guidance in this statement is not intended to substitute for a clinician's independent judgment in light of the conditions and needs of a specific patient.

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