

Evaluating Barriers to Care:

Assessing the lack of medical and dental care of the underrepresented populations in

Washington

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Many communities in Washington State experience dental deserts, regions where large populations live without access to basic dental care. Oral health has been viewed as the window to a person's overall health, where poor oral health has been shown to be associated with illnesses like cardiovascular disease, birth complications, specific types of cancer, dementia and many more. We surveyed the types of populations that are currently underserved and currently dealing with dental deserts. We surveyed the types of barriers experienced when accessing dental care. We surveyed patients treated at dental pop-up vans, and interviewed key leaders of the companies who decide how to distribute healthcare to underserved communities. While our research is on going, we hypothesize that those experiencing lack of access to dental care will include those who are uninsured, underinsured, unhoused, undocumented, refugees, immigrants, and those with mental health and substance dependency disorders in the northern central Washington. By the end of this project we expect to have a better understanding of the dental deserts in Washington state and how Medical Teams, which is a non-profit organization to help provide medical care to populations in crisis around the world can better provide access to their needs .