

## Our Veterans Are Denied the Much-Needed Dental Care

As you know, oral health is an integral part of overall health because it significantly impacts systemic health, quality of life, and economic productivity. Regular access to dental care is a basic factor in achieving and maintaining oral health. However, oral health care is an important issue for military veterans as many face several barriers to accessible and quality dental care.

There is a huge need to improve oral health care for our veterans. Poor oral health status has been significantly associated with mental illnesses including but not limited to depression, anxiety disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which may be more prevalent in the veteran population.

Currently, the Veterans Administration (VA) only provides dental care to veterans who have a service-related dental problem, are former POWs, or are rated as totally disabled as a result of their military service. Under this current law, **only about 8% of veterans are eligible for dental care from the VA.**

In addition, VA hospitals that do provide care for veterans are **failing to provide proper dental care** as shown in many studies and investigations:

<https://youtu.be/isSruasudyY>

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 18.2 million Americans, or about 7 percent of the adult population, are veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces in 2018. Orange County has the fourth-largest population of veterans in California. Orange County is home to 130,000 veterans and a more significant number of military-connected family members. Veterans make up nearly five percent (4.6%) of Orange County's total population. Given current trends, each year, approximately 6,500 military veterans will settle in Orange County as they transition from the military. According to the 2019 American Community Survey estimates, 67 percent of veterans in Orange County were active-duty pre-9/11 and 17 percent served post-9/11. Almost all (93%) veterans in Orange County are male and veterans ages 75 years or older comprise the largest percentage (32%) of the total veteran population.

Compared to the United States (U.S.) general population, military veterans are at an increased risk of experiencing dental problems.

Our charitable organization has been helping provide quality dental care to our veterans for several years. Please watch:

<https://youtu.be/kTOIdbFMKcU>

It is now clear that we need to establish Orange County Community Dental Care Clinic to **provide our veterans with free dental screenings and affordable and/or urgent dental care** since VA hospitals are failing to do so.

How can we work together to provide dental care that our veterans need?

Please send us an email: [info@dentistsforveterans.org](mailto:info@dentistsforveterans.org)

