

INTRODUCTION

Oral health is important for general health and well being. Research indicates poor oral health is associated with other chronic systemic conditions. Pregnancy may increase the risk of developing gingivitis, periodontitis, dental caries, and other oral conditions.



SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROBLEM

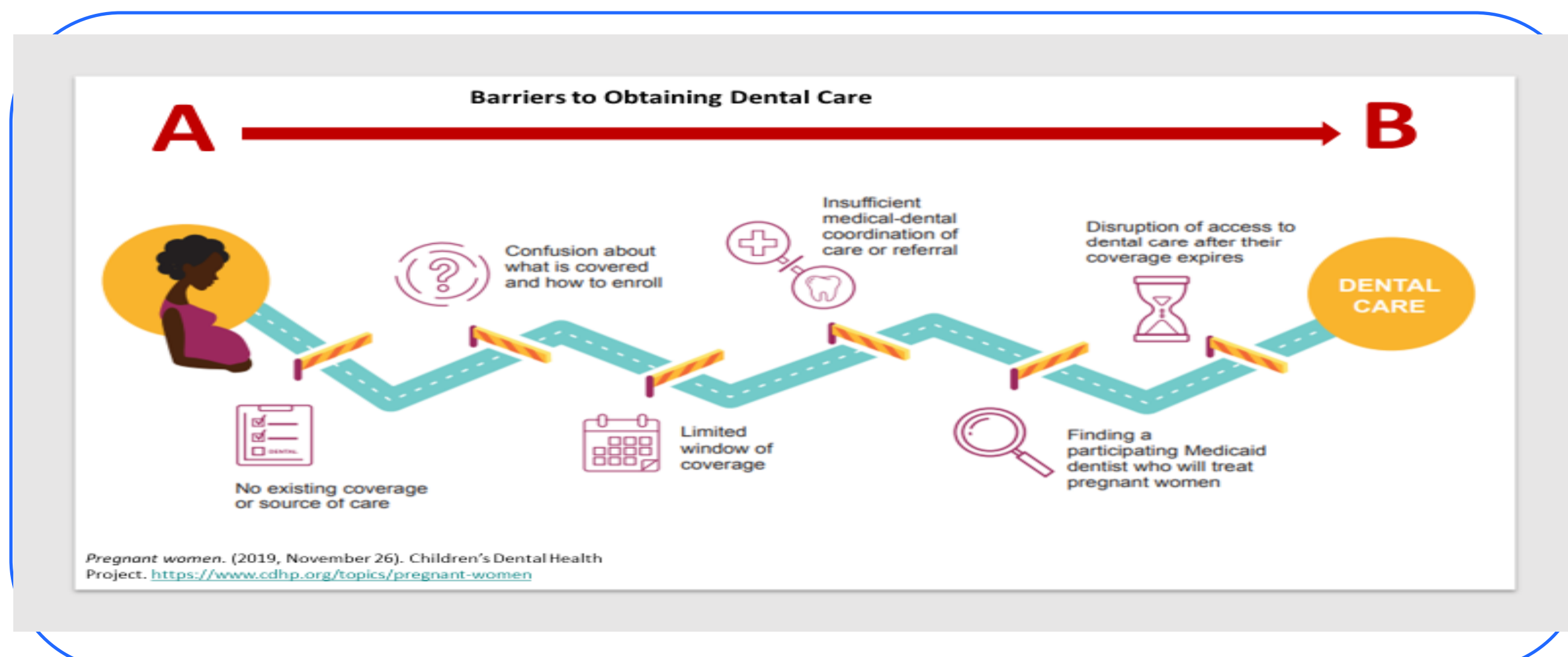
- Dental caries and periodontal disease is highly prevalent.
- A mother's oral health status has been correlated to her child.
- Dental care may be delayed due to lack of knowledge.
- Health professionals may lack training on the oral-systemic link.



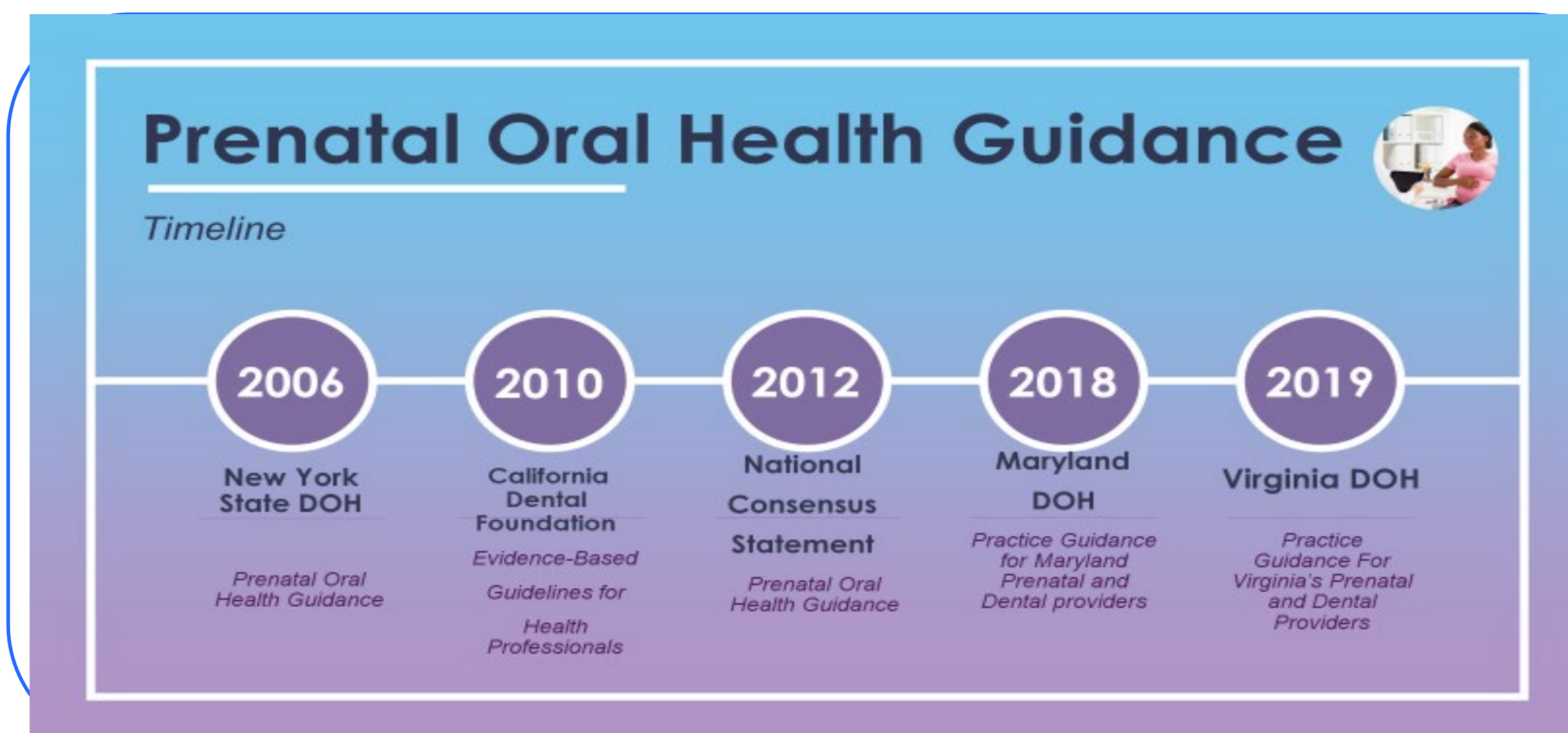
LITERATURE REVIEW

A woman's periodontal health can be affected during specific times in her life: puberty, pregnancy, menopause, and post-menopause, owing to hormonal changes and poor oral health habits which may increase the risk for periodontal disease. Often women do not seek dental care during pregnancy or may not be advised to seek dental care as a comprehensive component of prenatal care. Providers may not have received training on the oral-systemic connection and may fail to assess the patient's oral health or defer treatment until after pregnancy. Offenbacher's (1996) research revealed a link between maternal infection and preterm low birth-weight delivery (PLBW). Corbella et. al. (2016) conducted a systematic review and found associations between periodontitis and adverse pregnancy outcomes. These are indicators for more information concerning this topic. Interprofessional education can provide guidance and much needed collaboration.

BARRIERS



PRENATAL ORAL HEALTH GUIDANCE



INTERPROFESSIONAL EDUCATION (IPE)

- Integrate oral health into health professionals' curriculum
- Develop Interprofessional continuing education programs to increase interprofessional collaboration and practice with fundamental topics:
 - Oral health overview
 - Oral issues during pregnancy
 - Practice guidelines
 - IPE collaboration and practice

PUBLIC HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Dental caries, gingivitis, and periodontitis are common oral diseases presenting a public health concern. Despite intervention, these diseases remain highly prevalent, affecting communities of color and those living in poverty.

CONCLUSION

Oral health disparities are pervasive throughout the United States, despite public health efforts that focus on prevention. Interprofessional education seeks to address research and practice gaps in oral health and increase interprofessional collaboration across disciplines. This will improve the health and well-being of mothers and their children.

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