



**American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons**

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Medicaid and Uninsured Head and Neck Cancer Patients Have Worse Outcomes**

[Rosemont, IL, June 2, 2016] It is estimated that 48 million individuals in the United States lack medical insurance and for those seeking the treatment for head and neck cancers (HNC) the financial burden is only the tip of the iceberg. Investigators from the University of Pennsylvania and Harvard found that patients without insurance, as well as those who are on Medicaid, are diagnosed at later stages of their cancer and are less likely to receive adequate treatment, leading to less favorable outcomes.

“Health Insurance Affects Head and Neck Cancer Treatment Patterns and Outcomes,” an article featured in the June issue of the *Journal of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery*, details the study, whose purpose was to examine the effect of the lack of adequate insurance coverage on (a) the point in the disease process at which HNC is diagnosed, (b) the quality of treatment the patient receives, and (c) the patient’s likelihood of survival.

Compared with privately insured patients, the cancers found in both those who were uninsured or covered by Medicaid were more likely to have metastasized either locally or to more distant areas at the time of diagnosis. In addition, both Medicaid and uninsured patients were far less likely to have received appropriate treatment for HNC, and much more likely to die as a result of their disease.

This study not only underscores the disparity between privately insured patients and those covered by Medicaid or uninsured regarding timely diagnosis, appropriate treatment, and mortality rates. In addition, the researchers concluded, the huge gap between Medicaid and private insurance should serve as a trigger to increased discussions of how to improve the health care insurance system.

Read the complete study findings at [Journal of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery 74:1241-1247, 2016](#)

*The Journal of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery* is published monthly by the American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons to present to the dental and medical communities comprehensive coverage of new techniques, important developments, and innovative ideas in oral and maxillofacial surgery. Practice-applicable articles help develop the methods used to handle dentoalveolar surgery, facial injuries and deformities, TMJ disorders, oral cancer, jaw reconstruction, anesthesia, and analgesia. The journal also includes specifics on new instruments and diagnostic equipment as well as modern therapeutic drugs and devices.