

Effect of Different Messages and Systemic Barriers on the Utilization of Medi-Cal Dental Services in the San Joaquin Valley



Central Valley Health Policy Institute

Purpose

The Central Valley Health Policy Institute e-surveyed 591 Medi-Cal beneficiaries in the San Joaquin Valley. The survey aims to gauge how oral health communication messages may have an effect on the intention to utilize Medi-Cal Dental Services among the SJV beneficiaries. The survey also aims to understand the perceived barriers that beneficiaries may experience that hinder their ability to utilize their services.

Used Messages and Framings

Each group read one of the following messages framed along with one of those framing:

Messages

- Oral Health is mainly important for Appearance "Taking care of your teeth makes you more attractive"
- Oral health is mainly important for General Health "Oral Health is connected to overall health"

Framings

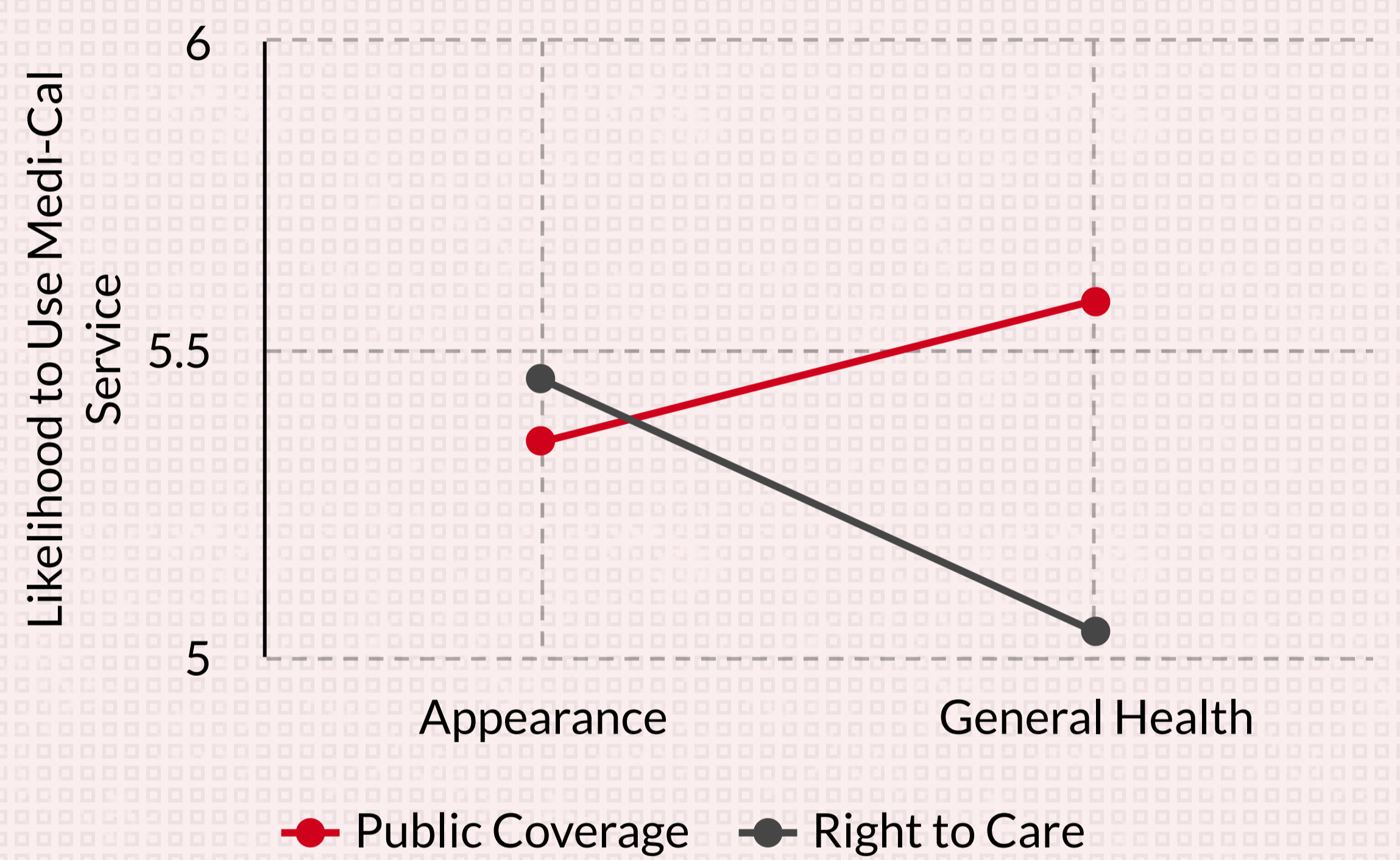
- Right to Care "Everyone should get the oral health care they need"
- Availability of public services "Low-income individuals can use dental services offered by the government"

Effect of Messages on the likelihood to utilize Medi-Cal Dental Services

Compared to all messages and framings, the most effective message at increasing the likelihood to use Medi-Cal Dental services was the one that aimed to highlight the importance of oral health for the person's general health (**General Health message**) when it is accompanied with the availability of Medi-Cal Dental covered services framing (**Public Coverage Framing**).

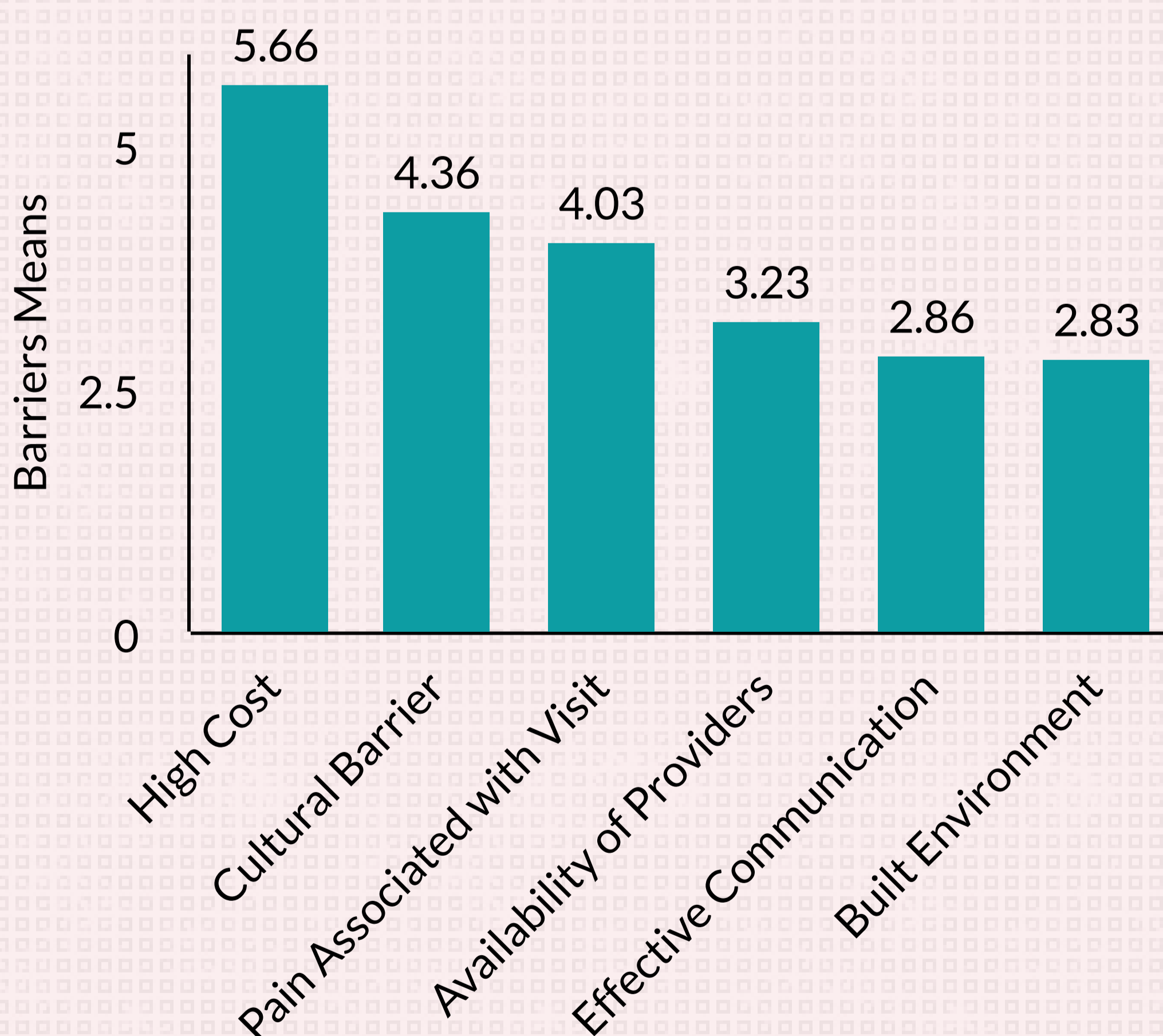
Compared to all messages and framings, the least effective message at increasing the likelihood to used Medi-Cal Dental services was the General Health message when it is accompanied by receiving this care is a right for everyone framing (**Right to Care framing**).

Interaction Effect of Messages on Likelihood to Use Medi-Cal Dental



Using the message that highlighted the importance of oral health for appearance (**Appearance message**) accompanied by **Rights to Care framing** was a little more effective in improving the likelihood to use Medi-Cal Dental services than accompanying it with the **Public Coverage framing**, as shown in the figure.

Comparison of Barriers to Visit the Dentist



Barriers to Visiting the Dentist and its Effect on the Likelihood to Use the Medi-Cal Dental Services

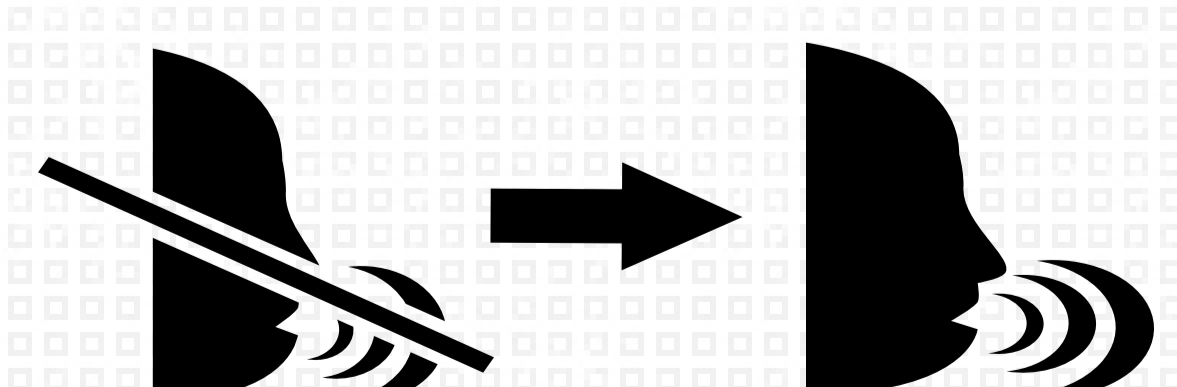


The **high cost of dental care** was the most cited barriers among survey respondents, as shown in the figure. This was followed by many other variables such as cultural, pain associated with dental treatment, lack of nearby providers, patient-provider communication, and the built environment were all cited as perceived barriers to seeking dental care.

There was a correlation between those perceived barriers and the likelihood to use Medi-Cal Dental services. The results suggest that...



- 1) patient-provider communication,
- 2) availability of nearby provider,
- 3) consideration of the patient's language and culture



.... are all determining factors for utilizing those services.