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**CDC Estimate: New Mexico, Hawaii Have Highest U.S. Incidence of Advanced Gum Disease**  
New Data Emphasizes Need for Oral Health Literacy, Access to Care in Largely Affected Regions

**CHICAGO (February 4, 2016)**—In a new study published by the *Journal of Dental Research*, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that at 52.79 percent and 51.10 percent respectively, New Mexico and Hawaii have the United States’ highest prevalence of periodontitis, the advanced form of gum disease.

The study, titled “Predicting Periodontitis at State and Local Levels in the United States,” also indicates high prevalence among southeastern and southwestern states, including areas along the Mississippi Delta and the U.S.-Mexico border. The states with the lowest prevalence include Utah (37.69 percent) and New Hampshire (40.51 percent).

The areas estimated to have the greatest concentration of periodontitis directly correlate with regions that also see high incidence of cardiovascular disease and diabetes, systemic conditions often associated with periodontitis.

Additionally, the latest findings are in line with early CDC reports that periodontitis disproportionately affects ethnic minorities, tobacco users, those of lower socio-economic status, and those in areas with sparse access to dental care.

<b>Top 10 States with Highest Periodontitis Prevalence</b>	
New Mexico	52.79%
Hawaii	51.10%
Florida	49.47%
Mississippi	49.22%
Texas	48.25%
Louisiana	48.21%
Nevada	47.84%
California	47.80%
South Carolina	47.78%
Arizona	47.73%
*Estimated prevalence for U.S. adults ages 30 to 79	

“This is the first study to model the distribution of adult periodontitis in states and local areas in the United States,” says Dr. Paul Eke, CDC epidemiologist and lead author of the study. Dr. Eke goes on to say, “We found the estimated geographic distribution of adult periodontitis to be highest among southeastern and southwestern states, with concentrated pockets along the southeast, in the Mississippi Delta, along the U.S.-Mexico border, and among Native American reservations. Given how closely associated the risk for periodontitis is with other chronic conditions, such as diabetes or cardiovascular disease, the prevention and treatment of periodontitis represents an opportunity for dental and medical professionals to work together to improve the public’s health.”

The figures are the latest reported by the CDC to determine the burden on periodontitis on the U.S. adult population. The American Academy of Periodontology (AAP) and the CDC, which have collaborated since 2003 to determine periodontitis prevalence, have found that nearly half of all U.S. adults age 30 and above have some form of periodontal disease.

“Periodontal disease continues to be a major health concern for people of all backgrounds,” says Dr. Wayne Aldredge, president of the AAP. “The AAP is committed to increasing public awareness of periodontal health and will continue to work with allied dental organizations, educational institutions, and government agencies to reduce incidence of periodontitis in the U.S. adult population.”

Periodontal disease (also known as gum disease) is caused by an inflammatory reaction to a bacterial infection below the gum line, and it can lead to swelling, irritation, receding gums, and tooth loss if left untreated. The AAP recommends regular flossing, brushing twice a day, and undergoing yearly comprehensive periodontal evaluations for the prevention of periodontal disease, which is treatable and often reversible with proper and timely care from a periodontist.

“Individuals who suspect they may have gum disease should schedule an appointment with a general dentist in their area,” Dr. Aldredge says. “General dentists can provide a referral to a nearby periodontist if disease is present.”

To learn more about periodontal disease or to find a periodontist in your area, visit [perio.org](http://perio.org).

**About the American Academy of Periodontology**

The American Academy of Periodontology (AAP) represents over 8,000 periodontists—specialists in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of inflammatory diseases affecting the gums and supporting structures of the teeth, and in the placement of dental implants. Periodontics is one of the nine dental specialties recognized by the American Dental Association.