



The Opportunities of Oral Health Advocacy





Who We Are

- Florida Voices for Health is a 501(c)(3) health care advocacy organization. We promote reforms through story collection, community outreach and education, and through relationships with media and lawmakers.
- We lead some coalition-based campaigns on different healthcare issues.
- Our issues include:
 - Strengthening Florida Medicaid
 - Improving access to Oral Health
 - Increasing access for Floridians with disabilities
 - Protecting Floridian Health Care Consumers
- Our main function is **capturing the health care stories** of Floridians and sharing them with lawmakers, the media, and our communities.



Oral Health in Florida


- Nearly 6 million Floridians living in areas (276) that have limited or no access to care. A designation it would take over 1,300 dental providers to fix completely.
- More than 1.7 million Medicaid enrolled children in Florida did not have a dental visit in 2021.
- Florida remains 2nd from the bottom for percentage of Medicaid enrollees who received any dental visit at all.
- In 2021, total charges for non-traumatic dental conditions treated in Florida's hospitals **exceeded one-half billion dollars**. 116,690 visits to hospital emergency departments (EDs) for preventable dental conditions



Learn more from
[Floridians for Dental Access](#)



(Root) Causes & Solutions

- There's a clear disconnect between those who create these systems and the people who use them.
 - Quantitative data without additional context is limited in its ability to move decisionmakers.
 - Bridging the gap to achieve systems change requires engaging both patients and decisionmakers
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Hidden Voices in A Fragmented Democracy

- Though Medicaid beneficiaries are key stakeholders in the American health care system, many of them hardly make a blip on anyone's political radar. (Pg11)
- Research has shown that the structure and design of **government programs can influence civic and political participation** by channeling resources, generating interest, and shaping interpretive schemas. (Pg61)
- Compared to non-beneficiaries who are similarly situated in terms of age, sex, receipt of cash assistance, education, race, marital status and income, **Medicaid beneficiaries are still significantly less likely to participate (politically)**. (Pg77)
- We should expect a group of people who are demographically similar to Medicaid beneficiaries but not enrolled in the program to also be less politically active.

FRAGMENTED DEMOCRACY

MEDICAID, FEDERALISM,
AND UNEQUAL POLITICS

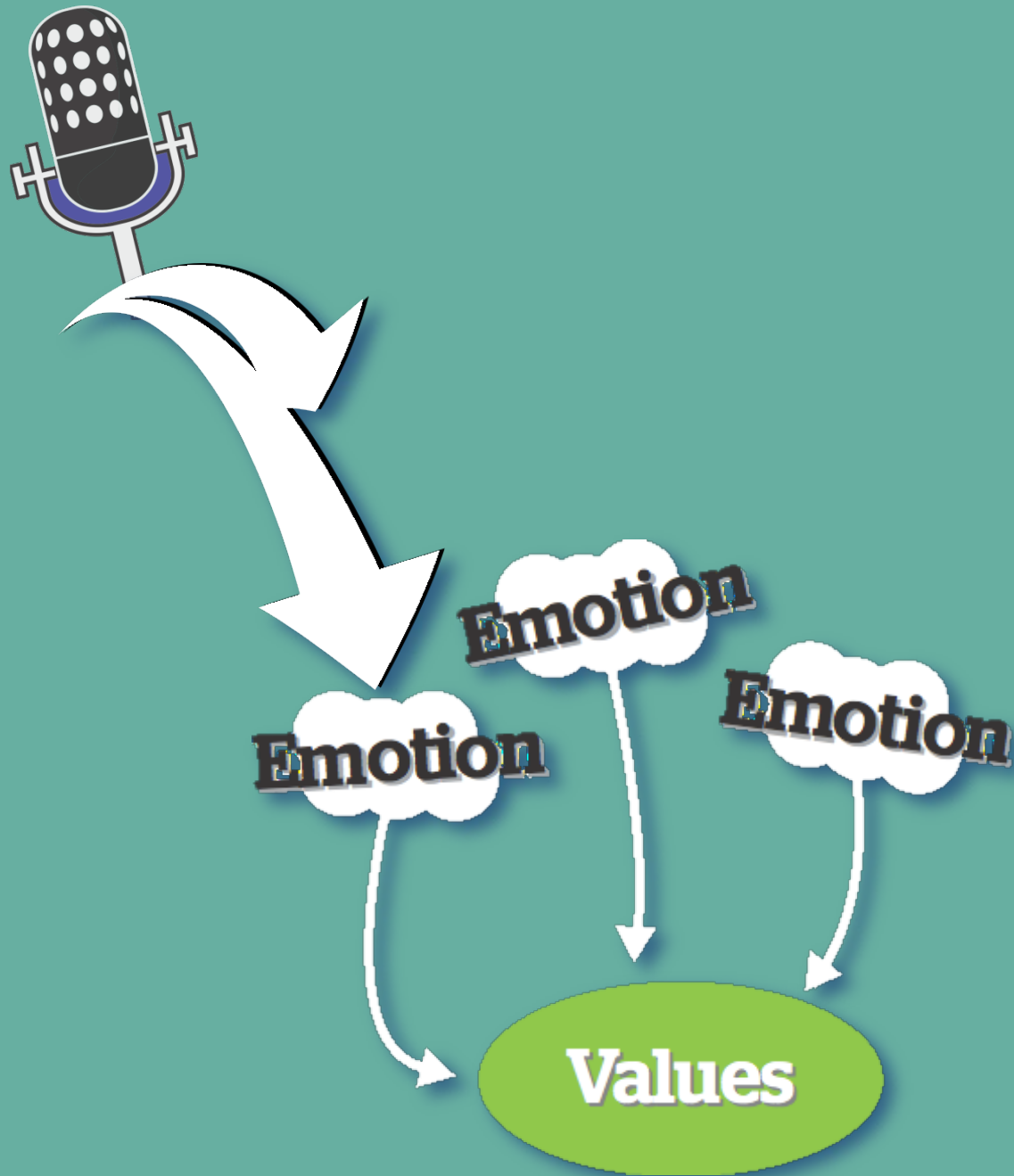
JAMILA MICHENER



Sharing Stories to Heal

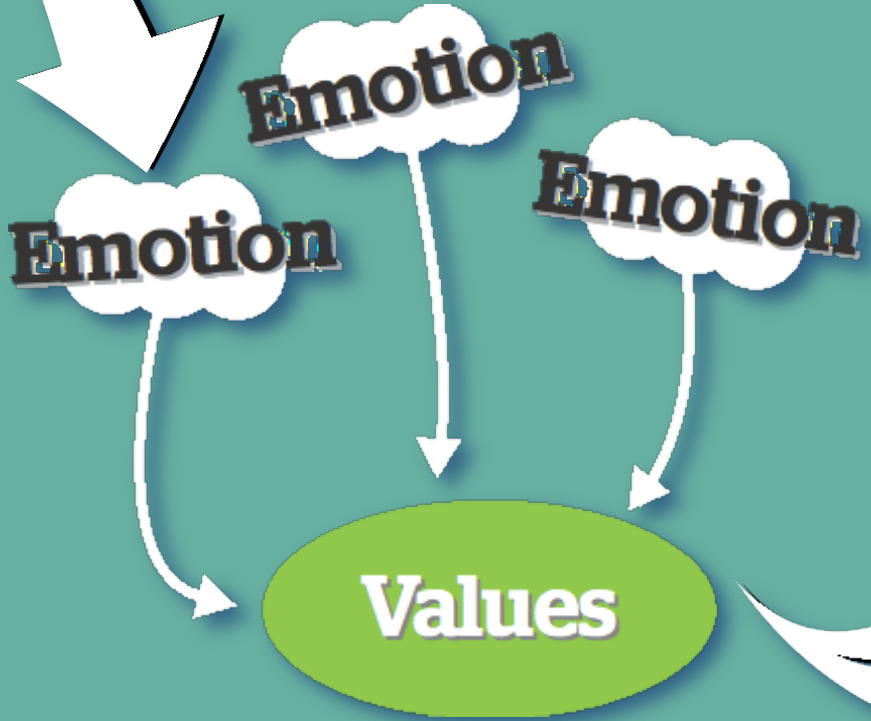
Sharing stories can help heal in many ways, including:

- Help people feel validated and reduce anxiety.
- Helping people process and make sense of their experiences.
- Connecting people with others and understand that they're not alone in their struggles.
- Promoting resilience and personal growth.



Stories help decision-makers FEEL the emotions that remind them of their values





ACTION!

Storytelling as a Bridge

We elevate stories and storytellers by:

- Scheduling constituent meetings for storytellers with their legislators.
- Capturing high quality footage shared across our platforms.
- Hosting press conferences featuring storytellers.
- Coordinating op-eds and letters to the editor.



"I had a doctor who did a CT scan or MRI scan...it was a picture of the upper skull, you know, and then included my mouth area. And he just said to me, Grace, you know, you've got some cracks in some of your teeth. I came to discuss this with my primary care doctor and we came to the decision that my teeth were severely impacted because in 2012, I actually had been treated for cancer, with chemo. And this is a pretty common occurrence that happens with cancer treatment, the teeth kind of take a hit."

Grace M., Alachua County

The Big Picture!

- The impact of poor oral health is felt across so many demographic groups, political ideologies, and socio-economic statuses.
- There's an opportunity to organize diverse communities and engage decisionmakers.
- Our hope is that our national network, through storytelling, can create and share a cohesive narrative that transforms public health in the US.

