# Oral Health

Phone: 515-242-6383
www.idph.state.ia.us/OHDS/OralHealth.aspx

Promoting & Protecting the Health of Iowans

IDPH Iowa Department of Public Health

Smile! Everyone wants a bright, beautiful smile. But oral health is more than straight, shiny-white teeth. Did you know poor oral health in children can affect speech development? And, that 51 million school hours are lost each year to dental-related illness? Did you know poor oral health in adults has been linked to heart disease? Unfortunately, getting needed dental care is difficult for low-income and uninsured families in Iowa. The Oral Health Center within the IDPH Bureau of Oral and Health Delivery Systems has programs that work to improve the oral health of all Iowans, regardless of income.

The Oral Health Center (OHC) encourages local public health partners to provide preventive services, like fluoride applications and dental sealants, and to provide education and assist families in making dental appointments. As a result, more than twice as many Medicaid-enrolled children are receiving dental care than in 2000.

Expanding access to oral health care for all Iowans is truly something to smile about.

**Did you know?** Nearly 95% of Iowa children have health insurance, but only about 85% have insurance for dental care.

## Why are Oral Health programs important to promoting and protecting the health of Iowans?

- Oral health directly affects the health and wellness of all Iowans.
- Cavities can be prevented.
- 14% of Iowa third-graders have untreated cavities; nearly one out of every five low-income children has untreated cavities.
- Many families don't know about the importance of oral health and know little about proper oral hygiene and preventive care.
- Access to dental care is a major problem for low-income Iowa families. For children on Medicaid, 45% go without any dental services at all.
- Early access to preventive dental services saves money! For at-risk children, having fluoride applications as soon as teeth erupt reduces the chance that teeth get decayed and need fillings or crowns. A fluoride application costs just $14. A small filling costs more than 3 times that.
- Iowa's dental workforce is aging and decreasing in number, particularly in rural parts of the state.

## Which Iowa Public Health Goals are we working to achieve?

Promote healthy behaviors

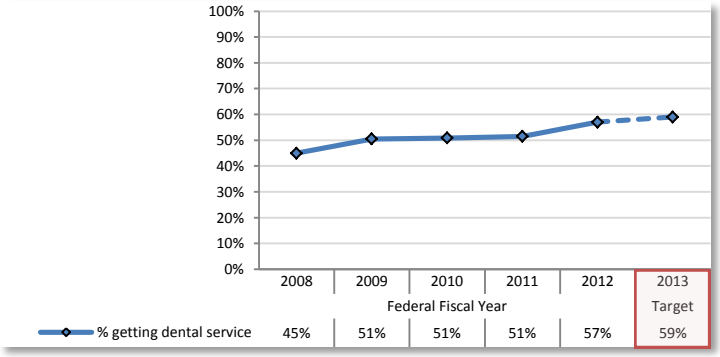
Strengthen the public health infrastructure

## What do we do?

- Coordinate the I-Smile™ program, which helps local public health partners promote oral health, provide preventive services, and educate the public about the importance of early and regular oral health care.
- Increase awareness of children's oral health with physicians, nurses, and physician assistants, and train them to provide oral screenings and preventive care for families.
- Work with local public health partners to help families make appointments and find payment sources for dental care.
- Provide funding to public health agencies to provide screenings and dental sealants to low-income, uninsured, and underinsured children in grades 2-8.
- Coordinate oral health surveillance to monitor and track Iowans' oral health status and ability to access and pay for care.
- Oversee the school dental screening requirement for children newly enrolling in elementary and high school.
- Track services provided by dental hygienists working under public health supervision, to assure limited services are provided to underserved families.

## How do we measure our progress?

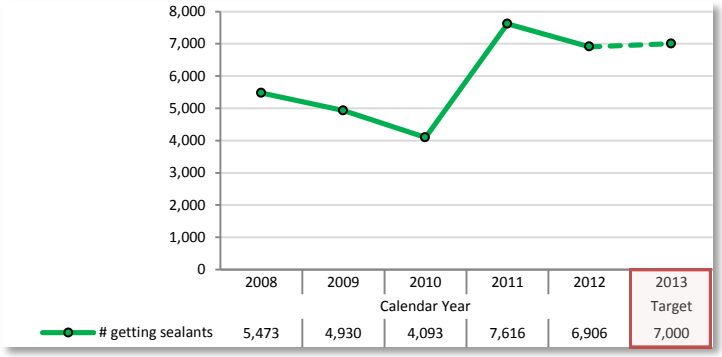
❶ **Percent of Medicaid-enrolled children ages 1-5 who get a dental or oral health service.**




Data Source: Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Form 4.16. Data are available annually. Federal Fiscal Year 2013 data not yet available.

**How are we doing?** Gains have been seen annually. Since 2006, I-Smile™ is helping us achieve a larger annual increase.

❷ **Number of children ages 0-20 getting dental sealants from hygienists practicing under public health supervision.**




Data Source: IDPH Public Health Supervision year-end reports. Data are available annually.

**How are we doing?** Public health supervision has been allowed since 2004. In calendar year 2012, 6906 children received sealants.

## What can Iowans do to help?

1. Learn about the importance of good oral health and how to keep your mouth healthy.
2. Use the Oral Health Center as a trusted source for oral health information and policy development.
3. Encourage sufficient funding for the Oral Health Center to help the success of its programs.

## Expenditures

General fund, federal funds, intra state receipts* (Dept of Human Services), & private grants*. State funds are used for a 25% match for the Title V Maternal & Child Health Block Grant: K05-0503/0561; 0153-0502/0504/1110.

| | State Fiscal Year 2012 Actual | State Fiscal Year 2013 Actual | State Fiscal Year 2014 Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|
| State funds | $309,746 | $290,870 | $276,274 |
| Federal funds | $496,845 | $400,911 | $757,391 |
| Other funds* | $1,926,354 | $1,971,409 | $1,969,599 |
| **Total funds** | **$2,732,945** | **$2,663,190** | **$3,003,264** |
| FTEs | 6.44 | 5.61 | 6.65 |

**Note:** Funding information is intended to provide an overview of funding related to the program area. It does not include all federal and state requirements and/or restrictions for the use of funds. Contact the program area for more detailed budget information.


Iowa Department of Public Health ◆ Division of Health Promotion & Chronic Disease Prevention ◆ Oral Health

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