

# Priority: Oral Health Care

**Goal: Reduce disparities in accessing and utilizing preventive oral health services.**

## **What is Oral Health Care and Why is it Important?**

Oral health is a significant public health concern. It includes oral diseases such as dental caries, periodontal disease, and tooth loss; all of which can have negative psychosocial effects. Poor oral health can impact speech, the ability to chew, nutritional intake, and lower self-esteem, making it more difficult to develop social relationships with peers.

Children with poor oral health have a harder time focusing on school and miss more school days due to dental pain. Adults experience greater challenges interviewing for employment, which can impact their socioeconomic position. Populations that struggle with mental illness, pain management, and substance abuse disorders (e.g., alcohol, tobacco, opioids, and other illicit drugs) experience an increased risk to their oral health. Oral health impacts systemic health and is a key driver of overall well-being. In fact, it has been linked to chronic diseases such as heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes, and obesity, with research indicating a bidirectional relationship.

Data from the 2017-2018 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) found that 13.2% of children aged 2-11 had untreated caries in their primary teeth. However, oral diseases are not equitably distributed within society. Like with many other diseases, the most vulnerable populations are disproportionately impacted. The prevalence of untreated dental caries in primary teeth for children aged 2-11 was higher for Asian non-Hispanic (20.6%), Hispanic (17.8%), and Black non-Hispanic children (13.2%) when compared to White non-Hispanic children (9.7%). From 2019-2020, only 77.2% of New York children and adolescents aged 1-17 had preventative dental visits within the past year; more strikingly, only 51% of children aged 1-5.<sup>442</sup>

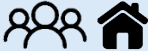



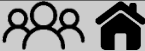

Oral health should be viewed as a modifiable risk factor, as many oral diseases are largely preventable. It is critical for a good oral health routine to be established as early as possible. This will assist in avoiding the short-term and long-term consequences of dental disease such as the development or progression of early childhood dental caries. Regular attendance to preventive dental visits, having access to optimally fluoridated water, and applying childhood dental sealants through school-based health centers and dental programs are public health interventions that promote good oral health. With the use of Medical-Dental Integration (MDI) models, interdisciplinary teams can collaborate to improve the quality and coordination of care across NYS. By focusing on these prevention measures, NYS can address poor oral health and impact overall health and well-being.



















**SMART(IE) Objective:**



**34.0 Increase the percentage of Medicaid enrollees with at least one preventive dental visit within the last year from 20.3% to 21.3%.**

**34.1 Increase the percentage of Medicaid enrollees aged 2-20 years with at least one preventive dental visit within the last year from 39.1% to 41.1%.**

Desired Outcome	Indicator	Data Source	Population	Baseline	Target
Increase the percentage of Medicaid enrollees with at least one preventive dental visit within the last year	Percentage of Medicaid enrollees with at least one preventive dental visit within the last year	NYS Medicaid Program	Medicaid enrollees	20.3% (2022)	21.3% (2030)
			<b>Subpopulation of Focus</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Target</b>
			Medicaid enrollees aged 2-20 years	39.1% (2022)	41.1% (2030)

Interventions	Population of Focus	Age Range	Intermediate Measures
 <p><b>Featured Intervention:</b> Increase the proportion of people whose water systems have the recommended amount of fluoride.<sup>443,444</sup></p> 	All Communities	All ages	Decrease in caries statewide
 <p><b>Featured Intervention:</b> Promote oral health literacy by sharing education materials via different means (such as smartphone apps, videos, games, text messages).<sup>445-447</sup></p> 	Everyone	All ages	Increased dissemination of educational material via electronic means
 <p>Prescribe oral fluoride supplementation starting at age 6 months for children whose water supply is deficient in fluoride, including areas with predominant well water use.<sup>448</sup></p> 	Children, adolescents	Ages 6 months – 18 years	Decreased number of caries in children who predominantly use well water

Interventions	Population of Focus	Age Range	Intermediate Measures
 <p>Incorporate oral health education into nursing programs including how to apply fluoride varnish.<sup>449</sup></p> 	Nursing students	College-age students	Number of nursing students trained, number of nursing programs offering dental education
 <p>Collaborate with and train health care professionals on oral health promotion, early detection of oral diseases, and fluoride varnish application.<sup>450</sup></p>  	Train health care professionals - public health detailing	All ages	Number of health professionals trained
 <p>Promote use of more affordable, less complex, minimally invasive care (MIC), to address caries disease early on.<sup>451</sup></p>  	Dentists	All ages	Number of dentists who received training on minimally invasive care
  <p>Promote use of tele-dentistry to provide access to care for geographically isolated patients.<sup>451</sup></p>  	Article 28 (clinics) in rural and/or underserved areas	All ages	Number of clinics/tele-dental encounters, tracking Community Health Worker care coordination
  <p>Provide and maintain updated lists of Medicaid-enrolled dental providers who are accepting new patients.<sup>452</sup></p> 	Local health department administrators/CHW	All ages	Number of local health departments that maintain a list and have policies in place that ensure list is current
 <p>Implement written protocols and standard operating procedures for providing oral care to non-ventilated patients for prevention of aspiration pneumonia (hospitals, residential care, and long-term care facilities).<sup>453</sup></p>  	Hospital and long-term care facility administrators, hospital and long-term care staff	All ages	Number of hospitals and/or long-term care facilities that have implemented written protocols

Interventions	Population of Focus	Age Range	Intermediate Measures
 <p>Develop page dedicated to oral health on LHD websites which provides education on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The importance of oral health beginning during pregnancy</li> <li>• Early caries prevention through nutritional counseling</li> <li>• The benefits of fluoride varnish application in the primary care physician (PCP) office at well childcare visits</li> <li>• The benefits of fluoridated water</li> <li>• The risks for and early detection of oral cancer<sup>452</sup></li> </ul> 	Local health department and IT departments	All ages	Number of local health departments that have a page on their website dedicated to oral health

## Lead Partner Agencies and Organizations

[U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#)

[NYS Department of Health \(Medicaid/CHIP\)](#)

NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

American Academy of Pediatrics

NYS Dental Association

Dental Society, Local District Dental Societies

National Network for Oral Health Access

Community Health Care Association of NYS (CHCNYS)

NYS Association of Long-Term Care Administrators

Oral Health Nursing and Education Program, Dental Hygiene Programs, Dental Schools, Community Health

Worker training programs, Community Dental Health Coordinators

Municipalities/local governments, local water providers/utilities

Local colleges, educational institutions, School-based health care centers, BOCES programs

Health care providers, health plans, insurance brokers

## Implementation Resources

[NYSDOH - Oral Health](#)

[NYSDOH - Drinking Water Fluoridation ROA](#)

[NYSDOH - Improving the Oral Health of Young Children: Fluoride Varnish Training Materials and Oral Health Information for Child Health Care Providers](#)

[NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene - Oral Health](#)

[CDC Fluoridation Engineering Opportunities - Fluoridation Trainings](#)

[CDC - Healthcare Association Infections - Oral Health in Healthcare Settings to Prevent Pneumonia Toolkit](#)

[CDC Community Water Fluoridation - What CDC is Doing](#)

[Association of State & Territorial Dental Directors - Championing Minimally Invasive Care - Aligning Advocacy to Transform Oral Health](#)

[Association of State & Territorial Dental Directors - Best Practice Approach: Early Childhood Caries: Prevention and Management](#)

[NYSDOH - Provider Network Data System](#)

[NYSDOH - Medicaid Enrolled Provider Listing](#)

[American Dental Association - Find a Dentist](#)

[Insure Kids Now - Improving Oral Health](#)

[MouthHealthy - Brushing Your Teeth](#)

[CHW Training - Oral Health Disparities: What CHWs Can Do](#)

[American Dental Association - Community Dental Health Coordinator](#)

[Teledentistry](#)

[Orthodontic Products - Quip Partners with Walmart on Teledentistry Offering](#)

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