

## Oral Health Disparity Programs

**Community Water Fluoridation, Mouthrinse and Supplement Programs.** DHFS promotes and advocates for community water fluoridation. The Department provides technical assistance to local communities and gives presentations to local units of government. DHFS promotes dietary fluoride supplements and provides technical assistance to local public health departments, including minority families. Through local public health departments, the Dietary Fluoride Supplement Program assists families with children ages 6 months to 16 years in non-fluoridated areas. The Fluoride Mouthrinse Program provides technical assistance to local public health departments and schools, including the Menominee Tribe, by targeting elementary school children in non-fluoridated areas.

**Healthy Smiles for Wisconsin, Seal-a-Smile Program.** The Healthy Smiles Program provides dental sealant grants to local communities to prevent tooth decay in low-income and minority children. In the 2005-2007 biennial budget, funding for the Seal-a-Smile program was increased from \$60,000 to \$120,000. In 2006, a three-year HRSA grant in the amount of \$96,427 per year was awarded to expand the Seal-a-Smile program.

In 2005-06, 20 community or school-based programs hosted 135 Wisconsin Seal-a-Smile program events. Seal-a-Smile screened 7,835 Wisconsin children and delivered sealants to 4,909 children during the 2005-2006 school year. The program documented that 261 children with special health care needs were served. On average, 3.76 teeth per child were sealed. In addition to placing 18,480 dental sealants on 25,544 surfaces, Seal-a-Smile referred 3,261 children for dental care, delivered fluoride to 3,304 children and provided oral health education to 9,404 children.

**Maternal and Early Childhood Oral Health Program.** The purpose of this program is to integrate oral health promotion and oral disease prevention services into prenatal and well-baby visits. This effort may increase healthy birth outcomes, diminish oral disease burdens, and promote and assure comprehensive primary oral health prevention services. Oral health consultants provide maternal oral health and early childhood caries training to primary health care providers in regional and local health departments, tribal health centers, and federally qualified health centers serving minority and low-income families. Program training includes the use of basic oral health screening, anticipatory guidance, age-appropriate fluoride treatments (fluoride varnish), and referrals to a dentist as needed, for children age 9 months to 3 years.

Policy changes were made to the Medicaid program to allow reimbursement to primary care providers (nurses and physicians) for fluoride varnish treatments to children enrolled in Medicaid. In addition, an administrative rule was approved to certify dental hygienists as eligible Medicaid providers.

**Clinical Services.** Marquette University receives funding through DHFS to provide clinical dental services to the underserved. Dental clinics that receive these funds are located in areas of Milwaukee, Racine, Brown and Dane counties identified as having underserved populations. A significant number of patients served by these clinics are minority, elderly, and low-income individuals.

The Marquette School of Dentistry Pediatric Grant Program provides comprehensive clinical pediatric dentistry services including a Head Start oral health program and school-based dental sealant programs targeted to the Hispanic/Latino population in Milwaukee. The school-based dental sealant outreach program provides preventive services to children in elementary schools. The Head Start component provided fluoride varnish treatments to preschool children.

The Wisconsin Technical Colleges Clinical Services Grant Program provides funding to two technical colleges to expand comprehensive dental care services. The Rural Health Dental Clinic Grant Program provides funding to two entities to increase access to comprehensive dental services in northern Wisconsin. These entities utilize both fixed and mobile clinic sites.

**Dental Access Grants.** Early in 2007, over \$4.1 million was awarded to 16 agencies and organizations to improve access to oral health services. The focus was improving infrastructure and capacity related to oral health services in Wisconsin. All of these projects serve high-risk individuals and help to reduce oral health disparities in the state.

**Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Oral Health.** DHFS is committed to assessing the oral health of racial and ethnic minority children through the Division of Public Health Wisconsin Youth Oral Health Data Collection Plan. In 2001-2002, the Make Your Smile Count Survey gathered information on a statewide, representative, random sample of Wisconsin's third-grade children; the first statewide oral health screening survey of children enrolled in Head Start was completed in 2003. Key findings by race and ethnicity were highlighted in these reports. Plans are under way to conduct another statewide survey of third-grade children in 2007-2008.

**Spit Tobacco Program.** The Department of Health and Family Services contracts with the Wisconsin Dental Association, the Milwaukee Brewers and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction to provide education to fifth-grade students throughout the state to help children resist social pressure to use spit tobacco.