



Oral Health Program (OHP)

Our Work

The Oral Health Program protects and promotes the oral health of the people of Wisconsin.

Oral health plays a major role in overall health throughout the lifespan. Cavities remain the most common chronic disease of childhood impacting how children eat, speak, and learn. Poor oral health leads to missed school or work, expensive dental care, pain, and long-term health consequences. Access to dental care continues to be difficult for many as geography and insurance status determine whether most will receive care.



21,000+ third graders

Have had a cavity in at least one tooth.



1.7 million adults

Have had at least one tooth extracted due to decay or gum disease.



\$14+ million

billed for emergency department visits to address non-traumatic dental conditions.

Funding

The OHP's work is supported by general purpose revenue (GPR), private funding, and federal grants from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Priorities

Access to care

Reduce unmet dental needs by funding dental access clinics, rural dental clinics, Marquette University School of Dentistry, and more

Oral disease prevention

Administer water fluoridation equipment grants and oversee 25 Wisconsin Seal-A-Smile programs providing services to students

Oral health surveillance

Maintain a robust oral health surveillance system on oral disease burden, prevention, access, workforce, and more

Impact

Dental access clinics

The funded dental access clinics served more than 32,300 patients in fiscal year 2023-24.

Water fluoridation

More than 44,900 people benefited from the fluoridation equipment grants in fiscal year 2023-24.

School-based programming

Wisconsin Seal-A-Smile served more than 86,000 students during the 2023-2024 school year.

Looking ahead

The OHP focuses on improving oral health and increasing access to care by supporting the dental workforce, increasing Wisconsin Seal-A-Smile's reach, enhancing oral health surveillance efforts, increasing dental providers serving Medicaid members, and much more.

Oral Health Program

Bureau of Community Health Promotion

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