

Executive Summary

Healthy Teeth = Healthy Kids

A plan to improve the oral health of Milwaukee children.



2007

This inside cover page is blank on the actual printed document, but is helpful when printing this pdf double-sided to ensure the facing pages are in correct order.

Healthy Teeth = Healthy Kids

A plan to improve the oral health of Milwaukee children.

A community partnership created through a Healthier Wisconsin Partnership Program development grant awarded by the Medical College of Wisconsin.

The following key partners are responsible for guiding and creating this plan:

Children's Health Alliance of Wisconsin
Children's Hospital of Wisconsin Dental Center
Marquette University School of Dentistry
Medical College of Wisconsin
Milwaukee Public Schools

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Purpose of the plan

The dental disease burden among children in the City of Milwaukee cannot be ignored. It impacts the overall health of children and their ability to learn. School-based oral health programs, for elementary and middle-school students in the City of Milwaukee, reported untreated decay to be as high as 54 percent during 2005-06. An estimated 68 percent of children under age 18 in the City of Milwaukee were Medicaid eligible, but approximately only 18 percent received a dental exam in 2006.

The purpose of *Healthy Teeth=Healthy Kids*, a plan to improve the oral health of children in Milwaukee, is to serve as a blueprint to address the complex oral health barriers that currently exist. The recommendations are realistic, achievable and measurable, but require diligent efforts by community leaders, providers and policy makers. Significant potential barriers to success can be overcome by focusing efforts on increasing resources, maximizing utilization of the dental workforce and organizing a system of care centered on school-based risk assessments, prevention and referral for treatment.

Mission: Increase the number of children with a permanent dental home, allowing for early prevention, continuity of care and quality treatment.

Overarching goal: Reduce the proportion of children in the City of Milwaukee with active dental decay.

Objectives and key recommendations for action

- 1. Reduce the proportion of children in Milwaukee with urgent oral health needs.**
 - Establish an oral health care referral system linked to comprehensive school-based oral health programs.
 - Develop dental emergency facilities to provide immediate care for urgent oral health needs.
 - Train primary care and community health providers, and school staff to perform annual oral health risk assessments using a standard tool.
- 2. Increase the capacity of clinics and private practices to treat the uninsured and Medicaid populations.**
 - Significantly increase the state of Wisconsin dental Medicaid reimbursement rates and create preferred provider agreements to guarantee access for the Medicaid population.
 - Seek state action to create a single dental benefits administrator to manage oral health care for families covered by Medicaid and other government programs.

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- Increase resources to expand existing large clinics and Federally Qualified Health Centers to deliver oral health care.
- Increase the number of dental providers serving the Medicaid and uninsured populations through loan forgiveness programs; amend Wisconsin's exam requirements for state licensure; offer special licensing provisions for foreign-trained dentists; and allow the delegation of duties to auxiliary dental staff.
- Encourage the Milwaukee Area Technical College dental hygiene program to develop broader pediatric and public health dentistry experiences and encourage increased programming.
- Offer dental clinics the resources to utilize services of an oral health consultant to evaluate programs and make recommendations for achieving greater efficiency and quality service.

3. Increase the number of children having access to school-based oral health prevention programs.

- Expand current school-based oral health programs offering comprehensive services.
- Expand early prevention services that target infant and early childhood populations by increasing fluoride varnish applications at pre-school and Head Start centers.
- Increase parental participation in oral health education, prevention and treatment.
- Encourage all schools to support and participate in school-based comprehensive oral health programs and promote annual oral health risk assessments.

4. Increase the role of health care providers in assessing the oral health of Milwaukee children.

- Implement oral health training programs for health care providers working in pediatric and family practice settings, and provide necessary information to refer patients to appropriate oral health care providers.
- Advocate for the Medical College of Wisconsin and the University of Wisconsin Medical School to implement a comprehensive oral health curriculum as part of their formal training of health professionals.

How you can use this plan

The ultimate goal of this plan is to help drive local and state action to improve the oral health care of children in the City of Milwaukee. Key collaborators are identified under each objective in the plan to work on the respective strategies. This plan also will serve as a tool to raise awareness, educate policy makers and legislators, and implement oral health programs.

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