

2009



Partnering to Seal-A-Smile

A report on the success of Wisconsin school-based dental sealant programs.



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This report was developed by Children’s Health Alliance of Wisconsin and made possible through partnership and funding from Delta Dental of Wisconsin.

Delta Dental of Wisconsin is a not-for-profit dental service cooperation that administers and underwrites dental plans for employers throughout Wisconsin. Delta Dental of Wisconsin is the largest dental benefits provider in the state, covering more than 1 million employees and family members.

Delta Dental supports a significant number of charitable oral health initiatives focused on improving access to dental care and raising awareness of the importance of proper oral health.

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Executive summary

Purpose of this report

School-based dental sealant programs are being implemented all across Wisconsin. While this report provides a comprehensive overview of the programs' efforts and best practices, the focus is on the success of the Wisconsin Seal-A-Smile (SAS) program.

This information will bring attention to the great need for an increase in school-based oral health programs and other oral health prevention strategies. Expansion of programs will help reach populations without access to regular preventive care.

This report highlights the tremendous work being accomplished throughout Wisconsin despite limited funding. The findings in this report substantiate the need for increased state and private funding for school-based oral health prevention programs.

What you will find in this report

This report provides an overview of the success school-based oral health prevention programs have had since 2005. Key findings focus on caries rates, children served and other efficiency measures. Data was collected from current and past Wisconsin SAS programs in addition to other various programs not funded through SAS.

Individual program biographies beginning on page 20 show the unique activities, best practices and outcomes of programs across the state.

Key findings from the 2005-07 school years:

- The number of schools served by Wisconsin SAS increased from 135 to 200 with limited funding increases.
- The number of schools served by Wisconsin SAS with free and reduced lunch (FRL) rates of greater than 50 percent doubled from 48 to 97.

Executive summary

This partially addresses the disparity that exists in access to oral health care for low-income children.

- The number of children and youth with special health care needs (CYSHCN) served by Wisconsin SAS increased from 261 to 622.
- The overall average cost to deliver sealants decreased from \$89.37/child to \$77.45/child in 2006 due to increases in efficiency.
- The average amount of Medicaid reimbursement received by programs tripled from \$19.69/child to \$63.27/child due to the ability of dental hygienists to become Medicaid providers.
- The number of children screened and sealed increased significantly with no funding increases from 2006-2008.
- The percentage of children screened with untreated dental decay increased from 40.8 percent to 47.2 percent.
- The number of children who received fluoride treatments in addition to dental sealants doubled from 3,304 to 7,602.
- The number of children who received additional preventive procedures, such as cleanings and debridements, increased from 0 to 2,516 due to individual program changes.
- The number of children who received oral health education increased from 9,404 to 14,475.
- Sealant retention rates remained relatively the same.



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