Oral health is essential to overall health and well-being.

Caries, or tooth decay, is the most common chronic childhood health condition.

Although caries are largely preventable, if untreated, they can lead to pain, inflammation, and the spread of infection, difficulty eating, poor nutrition, delayed physical development, and poor self-image and socialization and even have negative affects on academic performance.
In 2021 in Wisconsin, nearly 20,000 emergency room visits for preventable dental conditions were reported.

In 2020, only 33% of those ages 1 to 20 who were eligible to receive Medicaid funded dental preventive services actually received them.

In 2019 more than 51 million schools hours are lost yearly because of dental disease.

By age 5, 1 in 2 Wisconsin Head Start children have had tooth decay.

Wisconsin ranks 43rd in the nation for access to dental care for children.

62 out of the 72 counties are considered dental professional shortage areas affecting over 2 million residents.


Evers' proposals on dental care: 'Putting money where the mouth is' (jsonline.com)

Multidisciplinary approaches such as integrating a dental hygienist into medical teams to deliver oral health care in settings outside the dental office help to:

- expand the number and type of patients who can obtain care
- improve patient outcomes
- reduce the cost of care
Adding value with integrated dental hygienist model:

1. **Medical care team**
   - Nurse
   - Medical clinician
   - Dental hygienist
   - Support staff

2. **Rooming**
   - Patient

3. **Treatment**
   - Nurse assessment
   - Medical exam
   - Hygienist services
   - Vaccinations
   - Patient dismissal

Additional services:
- Screening & education
- Fluoride application
- Silver Diamine Fluoride
- Care coordination to dental home
Snapshot of current impact:

8 health systems and centers

17,200+ patients seen for dental care
Perspectives of the team and patients:

From a provider’s perspective it's been just tremendous - knowing my patients are getting the care they need - for something that has been a chronic issue.

PEDIATRICIAN AT AN INTEGRATED CLINIC

...I have seen rampant decay on children who do not even have their entire primary dentition erupted, I have seen dental abscesses the size of a quarter, and I've seen an enormous lack of protective risk factors in many of my families. However, something else I have seen is a family’s acceptance of a medically integrated hygienist into well-child visit...

INTEGRATED DENTAL HYGIENIST

It's very nice to know that they take good care of my baby.

MOTHER (CARE RECEIVED FROM AN INTEGRATED DENTAL HYGIENIST DURING HER CHILD'S WELL VISIT)
Future opportunity:

Want to begin integration in your health system for your community?

To meet the dental needs of our communities—dental and other health care professionals must continue to work together to provide integrated care in a variety of settings to aid in reducing and eliminating social, economic, and other systemic inequities that affect oral health and access to care.

Consider:

As a medical team adding basic oral health assessments, fluoride and care coordination to your patient care

Incorporating minimally invasive approaches to dental and medical visits

As a dental team adding chronic disease screenings to your patient care

The option of adding dental hygienists to medical teams in your community to create additional dental access points
CONTACT INFO

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To learn more about how you can join medical dental integration efforts contact:

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