



*Smiles for Ohio  
Fluoride Varnish Program  
for Primary Care Providers*



*Ohio Department of Health  
Bureau of Oral Health Services*



## ***Smiles for Ohio Fluoride Varnish Program***

### Introduction

Dear Primary Care Provider,

The ***Smiles for Ohio Fluoride Varnish Program*** is one of a series of efforts spearheaded by the Ohio Department of Health to reduce health disparities in Ohio children. Early Childhood Caries (ECC) is a significant problem in certain socioeconomic and ethnocultural groups. Very young children from these high-risk groups are less likely to seek dental care than medical care. To take advantage of this fact, the Ohio Department of Health convened a group of stakeholders a few years ago to discuss a program that would reimburse primary care providers for assessing oral health and applying fluoride to the teeth of Medicaid-eligible children under age 3.

A fluoride varnish advisory group met several times to develop a training manual and a strategy for implementation for the ***Smiles for Ohio Program***. By training primary care providers to assess the oral health of infants and toddlers at well-child exams, they will be better equipped to identify children at risk for childhood caries. Research shows that the application of fluoride varnish can reduce tooth decay by 25 to 45% and remineralize early carious lesions. Physicians can submit claims and be reimbursed for providing this dental service.

The manual also contains handouts and anticipatory guidance that can be shared with parents and caregivers in an effort to help them learn behaviors that will help to prevent dental disease and improve the oral health of their children. In addition, guidelines and suggestions are provided to help the medical provider refer children to dentists for appropriate care.

We wish to thank the members of the advisory committee for their time and expertise. We also appreciate the helpful assistance of our colleagues in other states where fluoride varnish programs are already established.

A CD-ROM is included that contains electronic versions of most of the items in this manual. It also contains two video clips (windows media files) that demonstrate proper positioning for oral health exams as well as an actual fluoride varnish procedure. Additional files from ODH's ***Help Me Smile Program*** include background material for staff and parents concerning various oral health topics. Please duplicate as necessary.

All documents from medical and dental publications as well as internet sites are duplicated with permission from the organization/publisher.

**The following individuals served as members of the  
Smiles for Ohio Fluoride Varnish Advisory Committee:**

Jo Bouchard RDH, MPH, Acting Chief,  
Bureau of Child and Family Health Services  
ODH, Columbus, OH

Peg DiMarco, RN, CPNP,  
University of Akron School of Nursing  
& NAPNAP, Akron, OH

Paul S. Casamassimo, DDS, MS,  
Professor & Chair, Pediatric Dentistry  
Ohio State University College of Dentistry  
Columbus, OH

Lawrence F. Hill, DDS, MPH, Dental Director,  
Cincinnati City Health Department,  
Cincinnati, OH

Don Sabol, Medicaid Systems Administrator,  
Ohio Department of Job & Family Services  
Office of Health Planning

Jackie Campbell, MPH, Associate Director,  
Greater Cincinnati Oral Health Council,  
Cincinnati, OH

James Duffee, MD, Medical Director,  
Rocking Horse Center, Springfield, OH  
& American Academy of Pediatrics,  
Ohio Chapter

Mark Siegal, DDS, MPH, Chief,  
Bureau of Oral Health Services, ODH,  
Columbus, OH

Dina Thurman, RN, CPNP,  
Rocking Horse Center,  
Springfield, OH

Colleen Wulf, RDH, MPH,  
Preventive Services Coordinator,  
Bureau of Oral Health Services, ODH,  
Columbus, OH

Jon F. Wills, Executive Director,  
Ohio Osteopathic Association,  
Columbus, OH

Carrie Farquhar, RDH, BS,  
Oral Health Access Administrator,  
Bureau of Oral Health Services, ODH,  
Columbus, OH

Debbie Weber, Fluoride Coordinator  
Babies' Milk Fund  
Cincinnati, OH

Chris Moore, Director of Dental Services,  
Ohio Dental Association,  
Columbus, OH

Dr. Homa Amini, President  
American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry,  
Ohio Chapter  
Columbus, OH

Sandy Loveland, Ombudsman,  
Ohio State Medical Association,  
Columbus, OH

Stanley McCloy, MD, FAAFP,  
Ohio Academy of Family Physicians,  
Columbus, OH

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Ohio Department of Health, Bureau of Oral Health Services  
246 North High St., Columbus, OH 43215  
614-466-4180  
<http://www.odh.ohio.gov/odhPrograms/ohs/oral/oral1.aspx>

## Oral Screening / Fluoride Varnish Training Session

### Learning Objectives:

After the session the participant will be able to:

- Identify risk factors for dental disease in children under age 3 years
- Perform an oral screening to identify normal/abnormal dental conditions
- Practice appropriate positioning for an oral health exam
- Apply fluoride varnish to the teeth of high-risk children
- Educate caregivers on good oral health practices for themselves and their children

### Agenda

5 minutes	Introductions
45 minutes	Smiles for Ohio Fluoride Varnish Program presentation
10 minutes	Q & A and evaluations