

# Oral Health for Children With Special Health Care Needs Priorities for Action

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Recommendations from an  
MCHB Expert Meeting

## Definition of CSHCN

Children with special health care needs (CSHCN) are those “who have or are at increased risk for a chronic physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional condition and who require health and related services beyond that required by children generally.”



# Background



- There are more than 10 million CSHCN in the United States.
- Families cite oral health as the most common unmet health care need.
- Efforts to address this issue and raise awareness about difficulties in obtaining oral health have been limited.

## Expert Meeting

- The Maternal and Child Health Bureau convened an expert meeting, *Oral Health for Children with Special Health Care Needs: Priorities for Action* on April 14-15, 2009 in Washington, DC.
  - Attended by 29 experts from academia, advocacy and support groups, Medicaid, and federal and state government.
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## Expert Meeting

- Participants identified strategies, next steps, and key partners for improving the oral health of CSHCN as well as the oral health care delivery system in three priority areas:
  - Medical home and dental home interface
  - Education and training
  - Financing
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## Priority for Action: Medical Home and Dental Home Interface



Strengthen the integration between general health care and oral health care, including prevention, by addressing obstacles posed by the separation of medicine and dentistry

# Medical Home and Dental Home Interface

## **Objective 1**

Promote linkages between general health care and oral health care to ensure that CSHCN receive comprehensive health care services.

## **Strategies**

1. Strengthen and expand collaborative relationships.
  2. Develop referral and health-care-delivery mechanisms.
  3. Establish and maintain an inventory of services.
  4. Encourage the use of care coordinators with oral health backgrounds.
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# Medical Home and Dental Home Interface

## **Objective 2**

Strengthen collaborative leadership at federal, state, and local levels to promote the integration of general health and oral health systems of care.

## **Strategy**

1. Strengthen and expand communication and collaboration among government agencies to promote the concept of oral health as part of the medical home.

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## Priority for Action: Education and Training



Increase the knowledge and skills of health professionals and students in medical and dental schools and programs that work with CSHCN and their families to improve the capacity to address the oral health needs of CSHCN.

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# Education and Training

## **Objective 1**

Increase education and training opportunities and strengthen competency requirements.

## **Strategies**

1. Document the need for increased education and training opportunities.
  2. Support and facilitate education and training for general health and oral health professionals.
  3. Encourage the passage of legislation that mandates education and training, provides loan forgiveness, and defines CSHCN as an underserved population.
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# Education and Training

## **Objective 2**

Make oral health educational materials and programs that are culturally and linguistically appropriate available to families.

## **Strategies**

1. Develop materials and program to educate parents and other caregivers on how to prevent oral disease in children.
  2. Develop and identify resources to assist families and other caregivers in navigating medical and oral health systems of care.
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## Priority for Action: Financing



Strengthen public and private financing mechanisms to ensure the delivery of appropriate oral health care to CSHCN.

# Financing

## **Objective 1**

Promote financial incentives and policies to expand the size of the oral health care workforce and the number of facilities available to treat the oral health needs of CSHCN.

## **Strategies**

1. Encourage the passage of state-level legislation for comprehensive oral health care coverage for CSHCN.
  2. Support enhanced reimbursement to dentists who receive special training in the care of CSHCN and to dentists who treat CSHCN with complex medical conditions and behavior issues.
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# Financing

## **Objective 1**

Promote financial incentives and policies to expand the size of the oral health care workforce and the number of facilities available to treat the oral health needs of CSHCN.

## **Strategies (continued)**

3. Advocate for support for specialized programs or practices that focus on serving CSHCN.
  4. Provide incentives for oral health professionals to serve CSHCN.
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# Financing

## **Objective 2**

Identify resources and reduce financial barriers to ensure access to affordable comprehensive oral health care.

## **Strategies**

1. Provide information on options for affordable care and sources of financial support for oral health services for CSHCN.
  2. Provide affordable financing mechanisms with benefits that provide comprehensive oral health care coverage that meets the complex needs of CSHCN.
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# Financing

## **Objective 2**

Identify resources and reduce financial barriers to ensure access to affordable comprehensive oral health care.

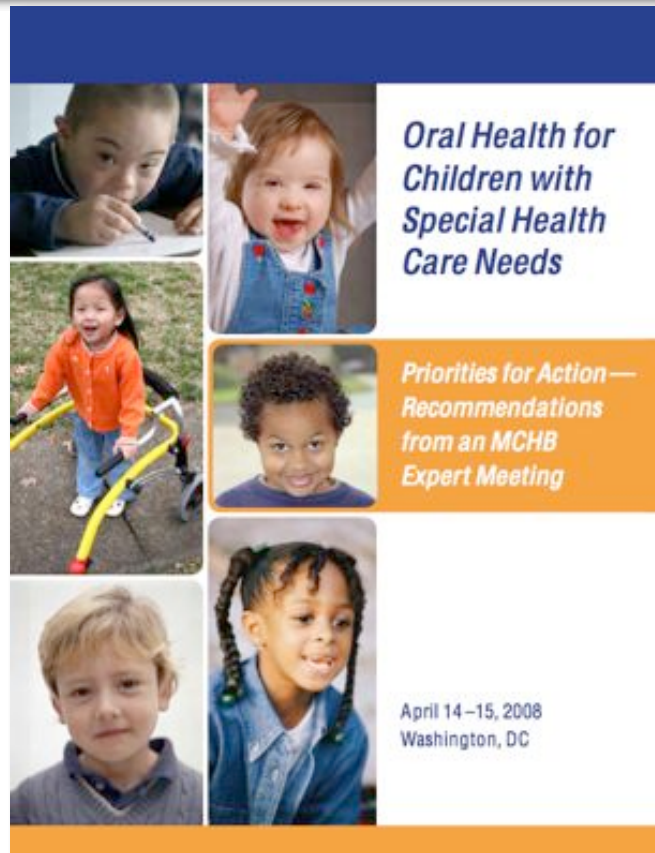
## **Strategies (continued)**

3. Identify dental payment options for adolescents with special health care needs who are transitioning to adulthood and who are no longer eligible for public or private (through their parents') dental benefits.

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# Expert Meeting Report



<http://www.mchoralhealth.org/PDFs/CSHCNExpertMeeting.pdf>

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