

Ohio's State Oral Health Plan

2021-2022

Goal: Ohio policymakers make informed oral health policy decisions.



POLICY OPPORTUNITY 1

During the 2019 school year, nearly 19,000 children received sealants through the 14 SBSPs that receive all or part of their funding from ODH.

Dental Sealants:

Increase State Budget for Expanding School-Based Sealant Programs (SBSP).

Dental sealants are an effective tool in both preventing tooth decay and stopping the progression of the disease. The average cost of applying a dental sealant to a child's permanent teeth is roughly one-third the cost of filling a cavity.

Sealants mitigate the need for more costly treatment in the future.

The oral health status of Ohio children has been steadily improving. Recent studies show that about 50 percent of third grade schoolchildren in Ohio have one or more sealants on their permanent (adult) teeth. Access to school sealant programs is a key factor for this improvement. Although the overall number of children with sealants has increased over time, children from lower income families are more than twice as likely to have untreated cavities than children from higher income families.

POLICY OPPORTUNITY 2

Ohio has 173 dental safety-net clinics.

Safety-Net System:

Strengthen Ohio's Safety-Net Dental System in the State Budget.

Safety-net dental clinics provide critical access to dental services to Ohioans who might not otherwise receive care and are often located in communities where there is a shortage of dental providers.

Threats to the Safety-Net System:

- Low reimbursement for dentists
- 22 Safety net clinics have closed since 2013
- Low medical-dental integration in Medicaid and Medicaid Managed Care Programs
- COVID-19
- Dental safety net budget has decreased, while need has increased
- Medical and dental electronic medical records do not communicate with each other

POLICY OPPORTUNITY 3

Patients with a telehealth visit cost 10% less to treat in 2018 than dental patients who don't use telehealth.

Telehealth:

Preserve Dentistry in Telehealth Rules.

Medicaid authorized certain telehealth services to promote access to oral health care during the pandemic.

Telehealth has the potential to reduce health care inequalities by creating a virtual dental home for Ohioans who otherwise do not have access to dental care.

Telehealth can benefit a broad range of populations, including Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries, the uninsured, underserved, and rural populations, people with urgent dental care needs, and people who fear going to the dentist.