

Ohio's State Oral Health Plan

2021-2022

Goal: Integration of oral and overall health across systems



School-Based Health Centers (SBHCs) are ideal settings to reach children and adolescents about oral health education. They are also a powerful tool for achieving health equity because they provide access to health care in a safe, convenient, and accessible location.

Dental Pain Matters! Child and adolescent tooth decay can impact the success of:

- Academic Readiness
- Absenteeism
- Career Readiness
- Mental Health & Well Being

POLICY OPPORTUNITY 1

Adopt K-12 Health Education Standards.

Including oral health in K-12 health education standards has the potential to:

- **Create** oral health literacy among a population of high-risk children.
- **Build** lifelong knowledge, skills, and habits essential to oral health.
- **Address** powerful determinants of oral disease including family and peer influences and access to oral health care.
- **Ensure** systemic delivery of age-targeted prevention services such as fluoride varnish and sealants.
- **Develop** care-management systems to help families successfully navigate community services and connect children to a dental home.

POLICY OPPORTUNITY 2

Include oral health in school-based drug prevention education & mental health promotion curriculum.

Include oral health problems associated with tobacco use, illicit drug use, and sugar-sweetened beverages. These include:

- stained teeth and tongue • bad breath • dulled taste and sense of smell
- gum disease • oral cancer • eating difficulties • burning mouth • tooth loss

Include psychosocial factors of drug abuse and addiction and their impact on oral health, such as:

- Neglected self-care, including oral hygiene.
- People facing addiction often seek healthcare of advanced stages of disease, including oral disease.
- Low priority is often given to oral health during periods of drug abuse causing people to seek only emergency treatment.
- Drug withdrawal may result in dental pain which interferes with drug treatment, abstinence, and relapse.
- Self-medication of dental pain by injecting drugs directly into gums and teeth thereby delaying treatment to a dentist.
- Illicit drugs may lead to an increase in risky sexual behavior resulting in the spread of infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS and oral cancer.