

**TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

**UPDATE ON ORAL HEALTH SERVICES**

**Presented to  
Governor Bill Haslam  
and  
Tennessee Dental Association**

**January 5, 2017**

**John J. Dreyzehner, MD, MPH, FACOEM  
Commissioner**

## **Table of Contents**

- I. Executive Summary
- II. Introduction and Summary of Dental Services
- III. Oral Health
  - A. Oral Disease Prevention
    - 1. Nurse's Fluoride Varnish
    - 2. School-Based Dental Prevention Program (SBDPP)
  - B. Dental Services
    - 1. Public Health Dental Clinical Facilities
    - 2. Dental Transport Programs
    - 3. Adult Dental Funding Program
    - 4. Distribution of Information

# I

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The mission of the Tennessee Department of Health is to protect, promote, and improve the health and prosperity of people in Tennessee. Operating within this mission the Tennessee Department of Health's Oral Health Services (OHS) strives to prevent and control oral diseases through organized community efforts. The following information is an outline of those efforts during Fiscal Year 2016. The Tennessee Department of Health dental program expenditures for Fiscal Year 2016 were \$15,964,426 and are broken down by each program below.

### Key Service Deliveries Fiscal Year 16

#### **Oral Disease Prevention—Nurse's Fluoride Varnish Program**

- An expenditure of \$145,847 (calculations based on an average of \$4.91 per application) provided 29,704 at risk children with oral health screenings, referrals, and fluoride varnish applications by Public Health Nurses in Tennessee Department of Health medical clinics.

#### **School-Based Dental Prevention Project (SBDPP)**

- An expenditure of \$6,803,139 provided more than 68,079 at risk children with dental screenings or dental exams, 189,705 with oral health education, and 48,290 children received 281,237 sealants in 461 schools at an average cost of \$24.19 per sealant.

#### **Public Health Dental Clinical Facilities**

- An expenditure of \$8,423,497 provided 18,669 children with 30,079 dental visits and 7,411 adults with 14,290 visits to the 43 staffed Department of Health rural dental clinics. A total of 26,080 individuals made 44,369 patient visits receiving 193,522 dental services (141,523 to children) at an average cost of \$43.53 per service.

#### **Adult Dental Funding Program**

- An expenditure of \$737,790 provided 11,648 individuals with 23,857 dental extractions and 1,769 dental cleaning, at a cost of \$30 each. The grants were awarded by the Department for emergency dental services for adults.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Statement of compliance with 2012 Tenn. Pub. Acts, ch. 1061 (the "Eligibility Verification for Entitlements Act" as required by Tenn. Code Ann. § 4-57-106(b)). The Tennessee Department of Health, including local health departments, boards and commissions, has implemented protocols and policies to verify that every adult applicant for "public benefits" is an United States citizen or a "qualified alien," within the meaning of Chapter 1061.

## **Distribution of Information**

- The Department of Health distributed traditional paper literature covering a broad range of oral health information to other agencies and the general public. The Department has an Oral Health Services website to provide information to public health professionals, parents, community leaders, and the general public.

## II

### INTRODUCTION

This report is provided in response to Tennessee Code Annotated 68-1-303(b), which requires the Commissioner of Health to provide an annual report to the Governor and the Tennessee State Dental Association (TDA) on the work done by and under the Commissioner in regards to distribution of literature throughout the state to inform the population of the “proper way to care for teeth”.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states tooth decay (cavities) is one of the most common chronic conditions of childhood in the United States and nearly one-third of all adults in the United States have untreated tooth decay. Tooth decay is a threat to oral health across the lifespan. The mission of the Department of Health is to protect, promote, and improve the health and prosperity of people in Tennessee. In advancement of this goal, the Department’s Oral Health Services Section (OHS) operates on the fundamental principles of preventing and controlling oral diseases through organized community efforts. Statewide school-based dental programs continue to offer high-risk populations preventive services to include sealants, oral health education, and screenings to identify children with unmet dental needs, referrals for these children, and follow-up on those children with urgent needs. Comprehensive dental services for children and emergency dental care to adults, unable to access care in the private system, are provided in fixed facilities located in rural health departments statewide. In an effort to improve access to dental services for high risk children in underserved areas, the Tennessee Department of Health partners with local school systems to offer a School Transport Program. The local school system transports target population children to local health department dental clinics, which provide comprehensive dental services. Currently the Department operates one mobile dental clinic which provides comprehensive care at local health departments without a dental clinic. Three clinical sites have partnered with area dental colleges, Meharry Medical College and the University of Tennessee Health Science Center, where fourth year dental students rotate through the clinic and help provide comprehensive dental services to a targeted adult population.

#### Summary of Dental Services

Program	Number Served	Number of Services
Nurse’s Fluoride Varnish Program	29,704	29,704
School Based Dental Prevention Program (Sealants)	48,290 (children)	281,237 (teeth sealed)
Public Health Rural Dental Clinical Program	26,080 (18,669 to children)	193,522 (141,523 to children)
Adult Dental Funding Program	11,648	25,626
Total	115,722	530,089

### III

## ORAL HEALTH

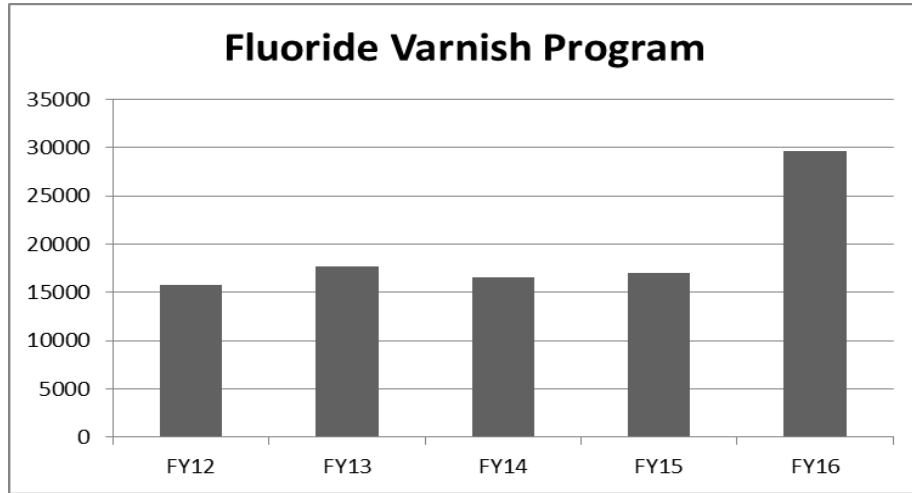
### A. Oral Disease Prevention

#### 1. Nurse's Fluoride Varnish Program

Tennessee Code Annotated 63-5-109(14) allows Public Health Nurses to apply fluoride varnish to at risk underserved persons in public health clinics.

The Nurse's Fluoride Varnish Program targets children 0-5 years of age being seen in health department medical clinics. Nursing staff screen these children and refer them to dental providers in addition to applying fluoride varnish.

During Fiscal Year 2016, 29,704 (23,106 were children 0-5 years of age) at risk children were screened, referred, and had fluoride varnish applied by nursing staff in Tennessee Department of Health medical clinics.



#### 2. School-Based Dental Prevention Program (SBDPP)

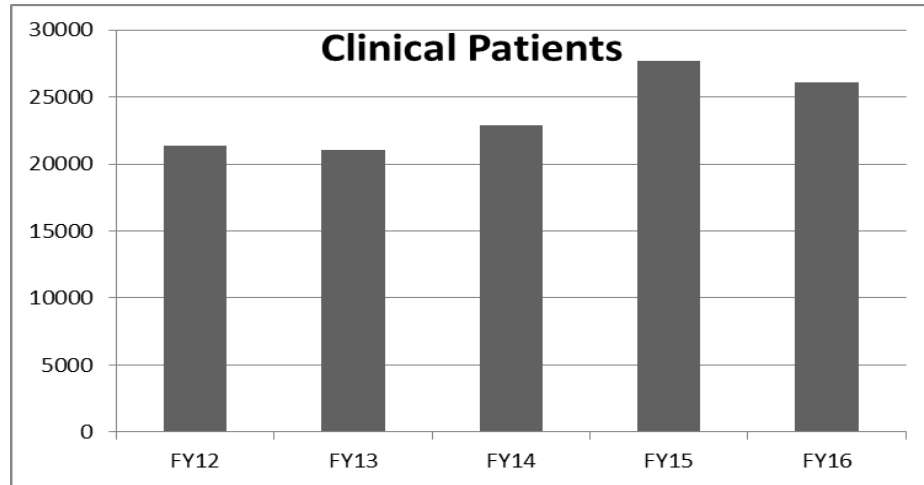
This program is a statewide comprehensive preventive program involving dental screenings, referrals and follow-up for dental care, oral hygiene education, and sealants. SBDPP targets children in grades K-8 in schools with 50% or more free and reduced lunch programs. During Fiscal Year 2016, 68,079 children received dental screenings or a dental examination, 189,705 received oral health education, and 281,237 sealants were placed on 48,290 children in 461 schools. During Fiscal Year 2016 the School Based Dental staff referred 1,568 high priority children with unmet dental needs for follow-up.

### B. Dental Services

#### 1. Public Health Dental Clinical Facilities

The Department of Health offers comprehensive dental services to children and emergency care to adults on a sliding fee scale according to income. Dental services are available at the 43 staffed local health department clinics located in

rural counties and one regional office across the state. Dental services are typically offered from 1 to 5 days per week. During the Fiscal Year 2016, 18,669 children made 30,079 visits to Department of Health rural dental clinics and 7,411 adults made 14,290 visits. In total during Fiscal Year 2016, 26,080 individuals made 44,369 patient visits receiving 193,522 dental services in the Department of Health rural dental clinics.



2. *Dental Transport Programs*

In an effort to improve access to dental services for high risk children in underserved areas, the Tennessee Department of Health partners with local school systems to offer a School Transport Program. The local school system transports target population children to local health department dental clinics, which provide comprehensive dental services. During Fiscal Year 2016 the School Transport Program provided dental services to 2,127 patients.

3. *Adult Dental Funding Program*

In Fiscal Year 2016, the Department provided funding for 11,648 individuals to receive 23,857 dental extractions and 1,769 dental cleaning. The grants were awarded by the Department for emergency dental services for adults<sup>2</sup>

4. *Distribution of Information*

---

<sup>2</sup> Statement of compliance with 2012 Tenn. Pub. Acts, ch. 1061 (the “Eligibility Verification for Entitlements Act” as required by Tenn. Code Ann. § 4-57-106(b)). The Tennessee Department of Health, including local health departments, boards and commissions, has implemented protocols and policies to verify that every adult applicant for “public benefits” is an United States citizen or a “qualified alien,” within the meaning of Chapter 1061.

The Department of Health's website includes an Oral Health Services site that provides a broad range of information to public health professionals, parents, community leaders, and the general public. The web site address for Oral Health Services is <http://tn.gov/health/section/oralhealth>.

Staff in all of the Department's dental programs distributes literature and educational information to individuals served. This information addresses a wide variety of preventive dental topics such as the importance of oral health and proper oral hygiene techniques. Requests for oral health information from agencies and the public are addressed by staff at the local, regional and the central office level.