



UPDATE ON ORAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Presented to
Governor Bill Lee
And
Tennessee Dental Association**

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Commissioner**

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I

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The mission of the Tennessee Department of Health is to protect, promote, and improve the health and well-being of all people in Tennessee with a vision of healthy people, healthy communities, and a healthy Tennessee. Operating on the values of excellence, service, compassion, and trust, Tennessee Department of Health's Oral Health Services strives to prevent and control oral diseases through organized community efforts. The following information is an outline of those efforts during Fiscal Year 2023. The Tennessee Department of Health dental program expenditures for Fiscal Year 2023 were \$16,578,261 and are broken down by each program below.

Key Service Deliveries Fiscal Year 23

Oral Disease Prevention - Nurse's Fluoride Varnish Program

- An expenditure of \$238,856 provided 11,834 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 \$6,639,303 provided 42,506 at risk children with dental screenings or dental exams, 140,384 children received oral health education, 8,546 children received 24,457 Silver Diamine Fluoride treatments, and 32,712 children received 206,959 sealants. These services were provided across 383 schools and 68 community projects.

Public Health Dental Clinical Facilities

- An expenditure of \$9,697,495 provided 12,518 individuals with 20,932 patient visits receiving 113,284 dental services at an average cost of \$86.00 per service.

State Oral Health Plan

- Plan updates for this fiscal year include the Tennessee Oral Health Data source grid, a nine-page document that provides information and instructions for accessing oral health resources at the state and national level. The Dental Care for Tennesseans map was updated.

Adult Dental Funding Program

- An expenditure of \$5,000,000* provided support for 30 providers to see 33,215 dental patients for 48,553 dental encounters.
The grants were awarded by the Department’s emergency dental services for adults.¹

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.
- Oral Health Services provided information on dental resources for the MyTN app. MyTN is a mobile application providing personalized service delivery to Tennesseans through technology solutions.

*Expenditure total reported by the Safety Net Program. Dental funding was grouped with Community Faith Based (CFB) and FQHC, so the expenditure for Dental is not a designated budget amount.

¹ 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 a United States citizen or a “qualified alien,” within the meaning of Chapter 1061.

II

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF SERVICES

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 regard to distribution of literature throughout the state to inform the population of the “proper way to care for teeth”.

Tooth decay continues to remain a threat to oral health across the lifespan. It directly impacts every aspect of our daily lives, employment status, school attendance, eating and speaking. Tooth decay is one of the most common chronic conditions in the United States. 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 oral health education, sealants, silver diamine fluoride and screenings to identify children with unmet dental needs, referrals for these children, and follow-up on those children with urgent needs. Comprehensive and emergency dental services for children and adults, unable to access care in the private system, are provided in fixed facilities located in rural health departments statewide. 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. OHS is currently involved in partnering with area dental colleges. University of Tennessee fourth year dental students rotate through health department clinics and help provide comprehensive dental services to a targeted adult population. OHS is pursuing a partnership with Meharry Medical College to provide staffing and comprehensive dental services in select health department clinics.

Summary of Dental Services

Program	Number Served	Number of Services
Nurse’s Fluoride Varnish Program	11,834	11,834
School Based Dental Prevention Program (Sealants)	32,712 (children)	206,959 (teeth sealed)
School Based Dental Prevention Program (SDF)	8,546 (children)	24,457 (SDF applications)
Public Health Rural Dental Clinical Program	12,518	113,284
Adult Dental Funding Program	26,817	52,423 (encounters)
Total	92,427	408,957

III

ORAL HEALTH SERVICES

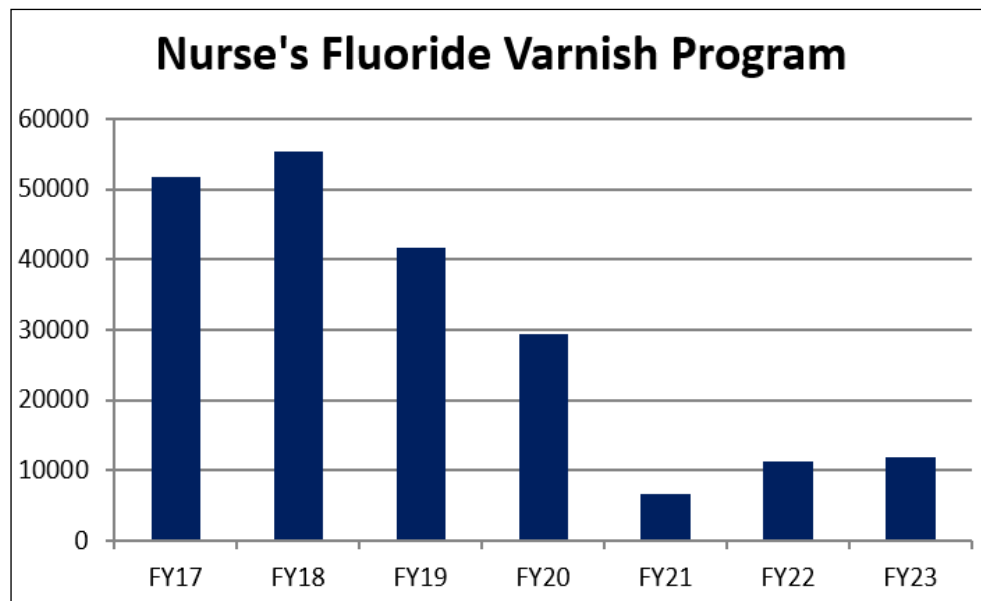
A. Oral Disease Prevention

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.

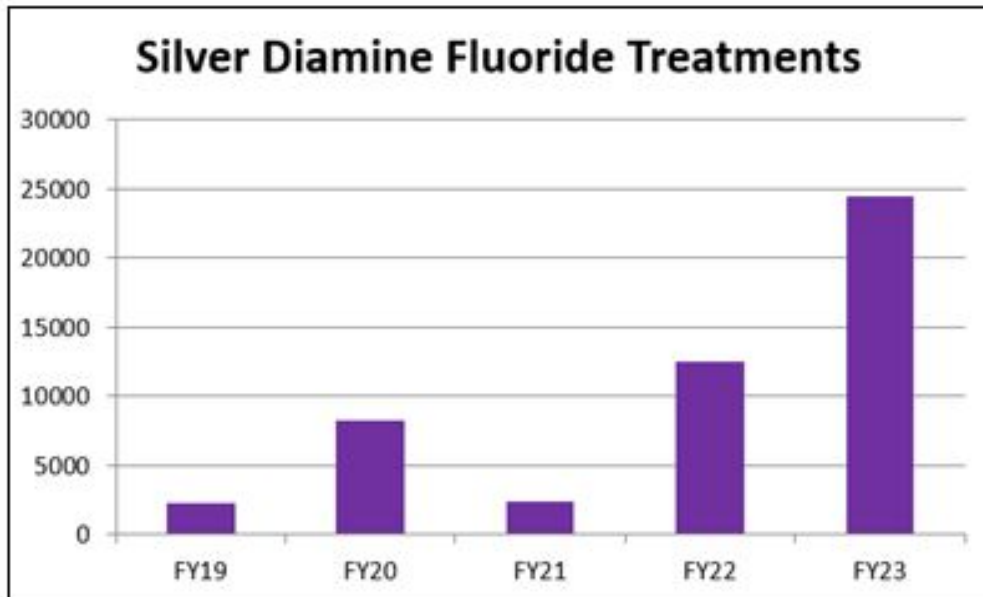
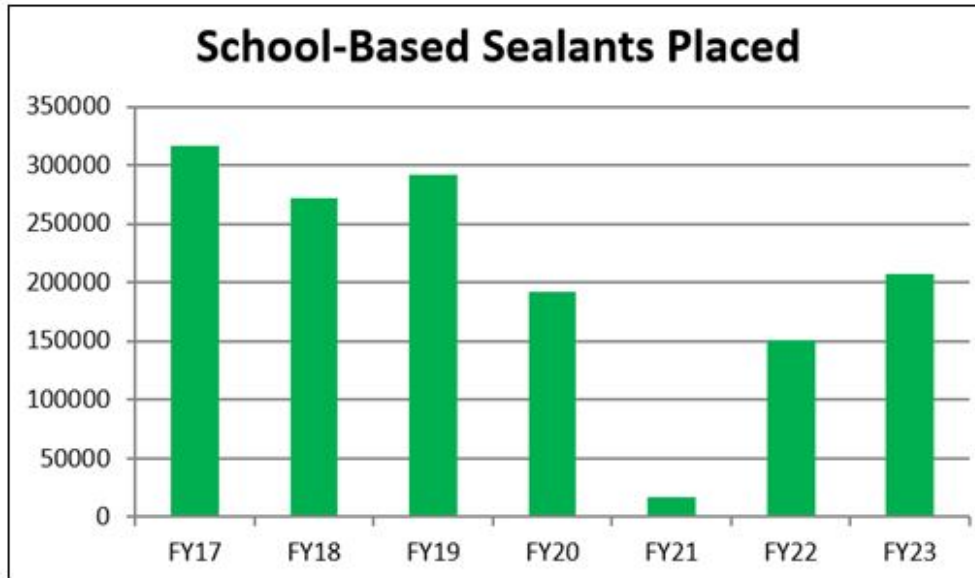
During Fiscal Year 2023, 11,834 (8,305 were 0-5 years of age) at risk children were screened, referred, and had fluoride varnish applied by nursing staff in Tennessee Department of Health medical clinics.



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, silver diamine fluoride, fluoride varnish, and sealants. SBDPP targets children in grades K-8 in schools with 50% or more free and reduced lunch programs. During Fiscal Year 2023, 42,506 children received dental screenings or a dental examination, 140,384 received oral health education, 8,546 children received 24,457 Silver Diamine Fluoride treatments, and 206,959 sealants were placed on 32,712 children. These services were provided across 383 schools and 68 community

projects. During Fiscal Year 2023 the School Based Dental staff referred 13,970 high priority children with unmet dental needs for follow-up.



3. *State Oral Health Plan*

This summary is provided in response to Tennessee Code Annotated 68-1-305 which established the state’s comprehensive oral health plan. The Tennessee State Oral Health Plan frames the issues of dental disease while focusing on four overarching areas to address and improve oral health: 1) Monitoring

Dental Disease in Tennessee, 2) Oral Health Education & Advocacy, 3) Prevention, and 4) Oral Health Resources & Workforce. Each one of these four areas have up to five recommendations that work towards improving oral health for Tennesseans. The Oral Health Plan is reviewed and its progress shared annually on the department’s website. The entire plan continues to be broadly distributed throughout the state and can be accessed from the department’s website at <https://www.tn.gov/health/health-program-areas/oralhealth/state-oral-health-plan.html>.

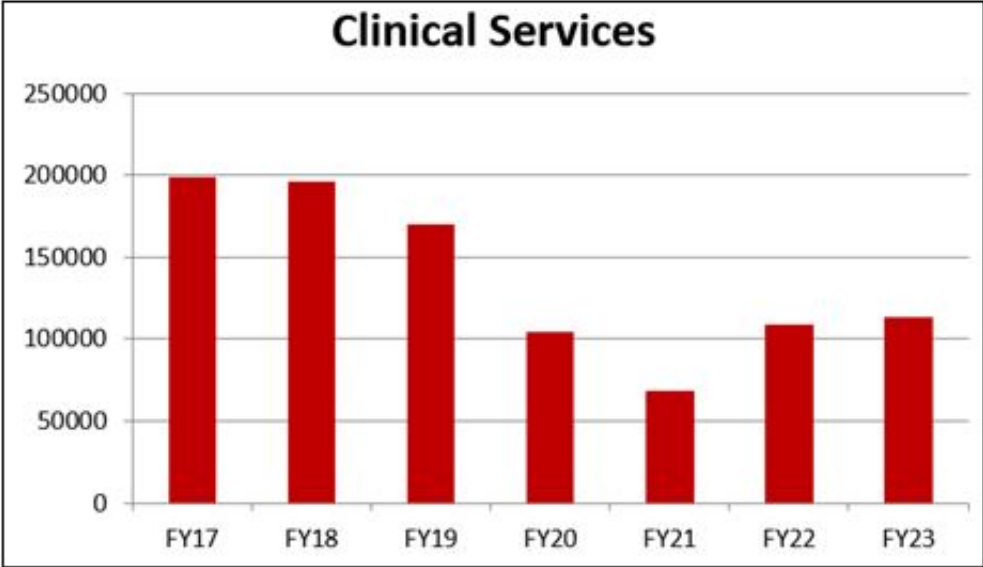
During Fiscal Year 2023 the Tennessee Oral Health Data source grid was updated with current information. The data source grid provides information and instructions for accessing resources for dental care, preventive services, and various surveillance systems at the state and national level. The oral health grid is located on the department’s website at <https://www.tn.gov/health/health-program-areas/oralhealth/state-oral-health-plan/oral-health-resources-and-workforce-updates/oral-health-data-resources.html>

The interactive dental care for Tennesseans map was updated. The map is located on the website at <https://www.tn.gov/health/health-program-areas/oralhealth/dental-care-for-tennesseans.html>

B. Dental Services

1. *Public Health Dental Clinical Facilities*

The Department of Health offers comprehensive and emergency dental services to children and adults on a sliding fee scale according to income. Dental services are available at the 25 staffed local health department clinics located in rural counties as well as one regional office. Dental services are typically offered from one to five days per week. During Fiscal Year 2023, 12,518 individuals made 20,932 patient visits receiving 113,284 dental services within the Department of Health 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 2023 the School Transport Program provided dental services to 426 patients.

3. *Adult Dental Funding Program*

In Fiscal Year 2023, the Department provided funding for 33,215 patients and 48,553 dental encounters. The Adult Health Care Safety-Net Program had 30 participating providers in Fiscal year 2023. The grants were awarded by the Department's emergency dental services for adults².

4. *Distribution of Information*

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 website address for Oral Health Services is <https://www.tn.gov/health/health-program-areas/oralhealth.html>.

Staff in all the Department's dental programs distribute 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 levels.

Oral Health Services, in coordination with Finance and Administration, continues to provide information on dental resources for the MyTN app. MyTN is a mobile application providing personalized service delivery to Tennesseans through technology solutions. The website with information regarding MyTN is <https://www.tn.gov/mytn.html>.

² 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.