

# Tennessee State Oral Health Plan

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## Annual Update – August 2019

### Introduction

September 1, 2017 marked the initial phase of implementing Tennessee’s first statewide, comprehensive oral health plan. This plan supports the mission of the Tennessee Department of Health (TDH), “to protect, promote, and improve the health and prosperity of people in Tennessee.”

Commissioner of Health, Dr. John Dreyzehner, stated, “The State oral health plan offers a blueprint for improving the health of the people of Tennessee by framing the issue of dental disease and prioritizing four key areas for addressing oral health in the state.” Those focus areas are:

- Monitoring Dental Disease in Tennessee,
- Oral Health Education and Advocacy,
- Prevention, and
- Oral Health Resources and Workforce.

A number of recommendations from these focus areas were identified as having the potential for efficient implementation during this first year. Over the course of the last 3 years, Oral Health Services (OHS) staff has been diligent to identify and initiate new, while also fostering existing, working relationships with partners and stakeholders to fulfill the obligation to implement this plan over the course of the next five years.

Below is a report on the outcome of those efforts and accomplishments as we conclude Year 2.

### Monitoring Dental Disease in Tennessee

- Recommendation 1: Develop a Tennessee oral health data source grid specific for the state  
[The oral health resource grid was completed.](#)

- Recommendation 2: Caries Risk Assessment on all patients  
[This will be a focus area in Year 3.](#)
- Recommendation 3: Research and review best practices for an oral health surveillance system  
[This work will continue into in Year 3.](#)
- Recommendation 4: Develop TDH surveillance system to monitor the Tennessee Cancer Registry and craniofacial health in Tennessee  
[The State's Cancer Plan for 2018-2020 was completed and this will be a focus area in Year 3.](#)

## Oral Health Education and Advocacy

- Recommendation 1: Raise dental provider awareness of their role in substance abuse prevention  
[OHS continues to provide information and monitoring of clinical public health dental providers across the state, providing on-going continuing education and awareness on this topic. Providers use the Controlled Substance Monitoring Database \(CSMD\) to check patient's prescription history. The CSMD is part of The Tennessee Prescription Safety Act of 2016 and TN Together Legislation to address the problem of prescription drug abuse.](#)
- Recommendation 2: Work with existing tobacco prevention programs for public awareness of the effects of tobacco in the oral cavity
- Recommendation 3: Work with community partners to increase public awareness of the impact of diet and sugary drinks on oral health
- Recommendation 4: Work with chronic disease prevention programs to develop messaging and an education course for healthcare providers  
[Initial efforts will continue with participation in bi-monthly conference calls with the TDH Health Promotion Program to determine messages and/or education courses needed for healthcare providers statewide.](#)
- Recommendation 5: Highlight integrated care models, specifically the Meharry Interprofessional Collaboration Model  
[This will be a focus area in Year 3.](#)

## Prevention

- Recommendation 1: Organize state-wide information and support meeting with community stakeholders to raise awareness of the benefits of community water fluoridation  
[These efforts will continue into Year 3.](#)
- Recommendation 2: Encourage greater use of sealants by dental providers in order to prevent pit and fissure caries in permanent molar teeth of children  
[These efforts will continue into Year 3.](#)
- Recommendation 3: Advocate for the usage of Silver Diamine Fluoride and provide education on its effectiveness as a preventative measure, specifically utilizing the University of Tennessee Health Science Center Silver Diamine Fluoride model  
[OHS began including SDF treatment as one of the components of the School-Based Dental Prevention Program.](#)
- Recommendation 4: Expand efforts to adopt the *Tooth Wisdom Get Smart About Your Mouth Workshops* for the elderly population  
[OHS participated in a partnership discussion with Smile on 60+ program to help provide services for uninsured adults over age 60. This collaboration will move forward in Year 3.](#)
- Recommendation 5: Advocate the “lift the lip” and fluoride varnish campaigns for medical providers  
[This will be a focus area in Years 3 and 4.](#)

## Oral Health Resources and Workforce

- Recommendation 1: Map existing providers/activity/services of oral health efforts for public and provider use  
[Dental resources were updated and the map and provider list was added to OHS website- Dental Care for Tennesseans](#)
- Recommendation 2: Actively seek funding for TDH dental clinics in order to expand the targeted population to include uninsured adults and partner with Safety Net Clinics to expand their oral health reach  
[This will be a focus area in Year 3.](#)

- Recommendation 3: Request TDH, Health Related Boards collect practicing status of dentists and hygienists during licensure and license renewal  
Initial workforce data on both dentists and dental hygienists as part of the licensing (initial and renewal) process by the Board started being collected in November of 2018. OHS will continue to gather and analyze this data.
- Recommendation 4: Raise awareness of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention *Summary of Infection Prevention Practices in Dental Settings*  
Information continues to be available on our website: [Oral Health Services -Infection Control](#).
- Recommendation 5: Raise awareness of the American Dental Association (ADA) Center for Evidence-Based Dentistry Guidelines
- Information continues to be available on our website: [Oral Health Services -Evidence Based Dentistry](#).