

Tennessee State Oral Health Plan

Annual Update – August 2020

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 3.

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 updated and posted to the OHS website.](#)

- Recommendation 2: Caries Risk Assessment on all patients
• This will be a focus area in Year 4.
- Recommendation 3: Research and review best practices for an oral health surveillance system
OHS is moving forward with surveillance in year 4.
- Recommendation 4: Develop TDH surveillance system to monitor the Tennessee Cancer Registry and craniofacial health in Tennessee
Oral Health Services was added to the workgroup for the latest plan and will be looking into participating in collaborative efforts in Year 4.

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
OHS continues to participate in Tobacco Prevention meetings.
- 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 4.

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 4.

- Recommendation 2: Encourage greater use of sealants by dental providers in order to prevent pit and fissure caries in permanent molar teeth of children
Dentaquest increased monetary incentives for providers offering SDF, Sealants, and fluoride varnish.
- 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 continued providing SDF treatment as one of the components of the School-Based Dental Prevention Program. By the end of Fiscal Year 2020, 2,626 students received treatment on a total of 10,549 teeth since the implementation of SDF in our program.
- Recommendation 4: Expand efforts to adopt the *Tooth Wisdom Get Smart About Your Mouth Workshops* for the elderly population
OHS began offering dental services in Lawrence and Maury counties for Smile on 60+ participants. This program helps provide dental services and transportation resources for uninsured adults over the age of 60. This collaboration will continue into Year 4.
- Recommendation 5: Advocate the “lift the lip” and fluoride varnish campaigns for medical providers
This will be a focus area in Year 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 on the 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.
TDH/OHS’s pilot project carved out funding for a public-private partnership for patients to continue their care into the private sector. The project was approved and ready to get off the ground, but with COVID -19, funds were stricken from last budget review. This will be revisited during Year 4.
- 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](#).