

# Tennessee State Oral Health Plan

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## Annual Update – August 2018

### 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 12 months, 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 1.

## Monitoring Dental Disease in Tennessee

- Recommendation 1: Develop a Tennessee oral health data source grid specific for the state  
Initial collection and verification of existing national and state-wide data has been compiled. This work will continue in Year 2 of implementation.
- 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  
The Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors (ASTDD) model was identified as a best practice for proposed surveillance plans. Most states used the Basic Screening Survey (BSS) tool, or a modified version of the tool, to gather surveillance data on target populations.

OHS submitted a grant proposal to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for the funding opportunity State Actions to Improve Oral Health Outcomes in May 2018. The application was recommended for approval and has been placed on a wait list for funding.

- Recommendation 4: Develop TDH surveillance system to monitor the Tennessee Cancer Registry and craniofacial health in Tennessee  
Initial contacts have been made to collaborate on existing cancer surveillance and monitoring efforts. Next steps in the following year will be continued participation in the Tennessee Cancer Coalition (TC2), to identify best collaborative opportunities with existing and new efforts outlined in the State's Cancer Plan 2013-2017 in order to enhance the craniofacial health outcomes in Tennessee. The current Cancer Plan is being updated.

## Oral Health Education and Advocacy

- Recommendation 1: Raise dental provider awareness of their role in substance abuse prevention

The TDH had National Safety Council Drug cards printed and distributed statewide; information placard provides Doctor/Dentist information as well as Patient information.

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.

- Recommendation 2: Work with existing tobacco prevention programs for public awareness of the effects of tobacco in the oral cavity

In February 2018 OHS applied for and received funding from the TC2 for “Tobacco Prevention and Cessation” project. The project addressed the cancer priority area of Primary Prevention of Cancer. Grant funding made the purchase of educational materials and resources that have been distributed statewide possible. These materials have been distributed for use within the School Based Dental Prevention Program (SBDPP) and county public health dental clinics. The resources are suited for use in community projects and have been shared with other programs state-wide.

- Recommendation 3: Work with community partners to increase public awareness of the impact of diet and sugary drinks on oral health

OHS called a team of experts together to develop nutritional messaging and materials for children:

- “Water Rules! Rethink Your Drink! Skip sugary drinks – they are the #1 source of added sugar in your diet,” and
- “Snack the Rainbow! Snack a fruit and veggie rainbow of color every day for a healthy smile.”

The project was implemented in February 2018 and materials were distributed to 13 regions statewide.

Oral Health Services is in the early stages of establishing a working relationship with TDH Gold Sneaker Initiative to expand this project. Among other focus areas, the Gold

Sneaker Initiative encourages age-appropriate nutrition and physical activity in young children.

Oral Health Services is among the diverse membership of the Middle Tennessee Oral health Coalition (MTOHC). Project materials were also distributed to the coalition members for use and distribution among their respective programs.

- 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  
Oral Health Services developed and distributed a Community Water Fluoridation information brochure for public use. The brochure was designed to educate diverse target populations, including policy-makers, laypersons, and water treatment personnel. The brochure is accessible on the OHS website and is available in both English and Spanish languages.

The TDH Community Water Fluoridation Workgroup presented a Workgroup Report to the Commissioner of Health in October 2017. This comprehensive report included national and state information and data and addressed the key factors of community water fluoridation as they pertain to Tennessee.

OHS identified a funding opportunity for community water systems to replace aging or install new equipment for fluoridation of community water. The *"Building Capacity for*

*Oral Health Fluoridation Equipment in Local Communities*” funding opportunity was offered by the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), in collaboration with the CDC in October 2017. OHS worked with the Tennessee Association of Utility Districts (TAUD) to increase awareness of this funding opportunity statewide. An announcement was placed on the Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) website. MTAS provides technical assistance to municipal governments in Tennessee.

OHS continues to foster a partnership with the TAUD, the state component of the American Water Works Association. This partnership with TAUD affords the TDH numerous opportunities to serve as a resource and advocate for water systems and facility personnel statewide.

OHS was represented at the August 2018 business meeting, and regional dental directors have had the opportunity to attend quarterly meetings as schedules allow. These meetings provide an opportunity for networking and fostering support between the two professions. These platforms provide an opportunity to recognize the efforts of our public health partners as they provide safe drinking water to the citizens of Tennessee. To date, certificates of appreciation and recognition, issued by the Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors (ASTDD), the CDC and the American Dental Association, have been presented to recipients.

OHS hosted a Community Water Fluoridation train-the-trainer event on November 3, 2017 in Nashville. Training was provided by the American Fluoridation Society. Participants were invited from a comprehensive list of partners statewide including water utility operators/managers, public and private agencies, insurance, professional organizations, and others.

Oral Health Services worked with the Tennessee Public Health Association (TPHA) to include a Community Water Fluoridation presentation as part of the agenda for the three grand division meetings held statewide in April 2018. Attendees heard national and state information on the topic of community water fluoridation. The CDC 2016 Water Fluoridation Quality Awards were presented to water utility personnel and elected officials who had been invited to participate in this portion of the program.

- Recommendation 2: Encourage greater use of sealants by dental providers in order to prevent pit and fissure caries in permanent molar teeth of children  
This will be an area of focus in Years 2 and 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 submitted an application for federal grant funding in March of 2018. The funding opportunity was offered from HRSA, Grants to States to Support Oral Health Workforce Activities. This grant application was denied due to insufficient data for Tennesseans, validating the need for improved data collection to support future efforts to broaden services to target populations moving forward.

OHS has taken the initial steps to include SDF as one of the components of the School-Based Dental Prevention Program. Information will be submitted to the Tennessee Board of Dentistry, outlining the protocol.

- Recommendation 4: Expand efforts to adopt the *Tooth Wisdom Get Smart About Your Mouth Workshops* for the elderly population  
For this current fiscal year, the Tennessee General Assembly appropriated \$85,000 to TDH, for the sole purpose of providing a grant to the Dental Lifeline Network to be used for a statewide Donated Dental Services (DDS) program. The DDS program provides direct services to people with disabilities or who are elderly that have no access to dental care.
- Recommendation 5: Advocate the “lift the lip” and fluoride varnish campaigns for medical providers  
This will be a focus area in Years 2 and 3.

## **Oral Health Resources and Workforce**

- Recommendation 1: Map existing providers/activity/services of oral health efforts for public and provider use  
Dental resources were identified and verified statewide; additional resources were also accessed to cross reference and identify other resources for mapping. TDH project

personnel were identified to create a map. OHS is currently waiting on a funding source; once funding is secured the project will move forward.

- 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 in Year 3.

- Recommendation 3: Request TDH, Health Related Boards collect practicing status of dentists and hygienists during licensure and license renewal

Meetings and correspondence with administrative staff of TDH Health Related Boards and the Board of Dentistry have occurred over the course of the past year. These discussions led to a proposal that will collect initial workforce data on both dentists and dental hygienists as part of the licensing (initial and renewal) process. OHS will be submitting a letter to go before the Board stating the proposed method to obtain workforce data. Upon receiving the Board's approval, OHS will work to move forward with this effort.

- Recommendation 4: Raise awareness of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention *Summary of Infection Prevention Practices in Dental Settings*

OHS staff worked with the TDH webmaster to modify the OHS website to include a new section, State Oral Health Plan. This section houses information developed to meet this recommendation, as well as Recommendation 5 (below). Providing this information in this public forum and encouraging partners and stakeholders to include a link to this information on their respective websites will serve to raise awareness on this topic. Access the information here: [Oral Health Services - Infection Control](#).

- Recommendation 5: Raise awareness of the American Dental Association (ADA) Center for Evidence-Based Dentistry Guidelines

As mentioned above, a new section on OHS website now includes information on the topic of Evidence-Based Dentistry Guidelines. The information includes links to the ADA resources and can be accessed at: [Oral Health Services - Evidence-Based Dentistry](#).