



VERMONT ACTION FOR DENTAL HEALTH



Vermont State
Dental Society

WWW.VTACTIONFORDENTALHEALTH.ORG

*Healthy teeth and gums
aren't a luxury.*



VERMONTERS DESERVE GOOD ORAL HEALTH

We can prevent dental disease and reduce the number of children and adults with untreated dental disease through the VT Action for Dental Health. Investing in education, prevention and treatment will expand our delivery system, improve the health of Vermonters and reduce healthcare costs in the long run.

COMMUNITY-BASED DENTAL CARE FOR EVERY VERMONTER

- **Tooth Tutor Program** - Children with tooth decay before age 2 are more likely to suffer from a lifetime of decay. This program ensures children have access to preventive, restorative and continuous oral healthcare. Established in 1993, the Tooth Tutor Program has expanded into preschool programs and middle/high schools. However, many schools do not currently participate and 26,000 eligible kids did not see a dentist in 2013¹.

Recommendation: Every young Vermonter deserves access to oral healthcare. The VSIDS will work with to expand this program into every school.

- **Community-Based Hygienists** - The Vermont Department of Health contracts with dental hygienists in about half of its 12 district offices.

Recommendation: To enhance oral health during pregnancy and critically important early childhood years, Vermont should put a public dental health hygienist in every district office.

- **Community Dental Health Coordinators (CDHCs)** - CDHCs are dental social

workers that teach dental hygiene to individuals in our communities and help patients keep scheduled appointments. VSIDS successfully piloted this program in 2013.

Recommendation: VSIDS will work to educate community leaders, health care providers, and social service organizations about the value of CDHCs with a goal of statewide adoption.

- **Nursing Home Care** - 80% of nursing home residents face barriers to dental care². The Vermont Department of Health piloted a project to place a mobile dental chair in a nursing home for residents with mobility issues, dementia or the inability to tolerate a visit to a clinic.

Recommendation: This program should be augmented to provide more mobile dental chairs in nursing homes and VSIDS will match every dollar the state invests, up to \$50,000.

INCREASING ACCESS

- **Serving Vermont's Veterans** -- Vermont needs to expand access to dental care available to Veterans, many of whom have unmet oral healthcare needs.

¹ Annual EPSDT Participation Report FY 2013 Department of Vermont Health Access; ²American Health Care Association, "LTC Stats: Nursing Facility Operational Characterizes Report," Sept. 2013 Update, pg.6



Vermont has something to smile about...

- 1st in children with no oral health problems in past year
- 1st in third graders with sealants
- 2nd healthiest state • 2nd in child well-being

...but there's still more work to do!

Recommendation: VSIDS will collaborate with the state's Congressional delegation, the Veterans Administration and the University of Vermont Health Network to expand options for Vermont's veterans.

• **Strengthen Collaborations between Dentistry and Primary Care** - Integrating oral health and primary care will improve Vermonters' overall health and lower healthcare costs. Costly and potentially debilitating diseases such as diabetes are a major challenge for primary care providers and dentists.

Recommendation: VSIDS will work with the State to cross train physicians and dentists in best-practice protocols to ensure better outcomes for patients and lower costs.

• **Expand Partnerships with Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs)** - Several FQHCs are working with community dentists to provide oral healthcare to underserved populations without added overhead costs. These partnerships expand access to care, and support the recruitment of dentists in rural and underserved areas.

Recommendation: VSIDS will work with FQHCs, the Bi-State Primary Care Association, the Legislature and the state's Congressional Delegation to extend this model throughout Vermont.

• **Reduce Emergency Room Visits** - The use of ERs for non-urgent oral health conditions is a costly problem for patients and hospitals. Moving patients out of the ER and into the care of a community dentist lowers costs, relieves ER wait times, and ensures patients receive quality care in the best setting.

Recommendation: VSIDS in concert with the ADA will fund a comprehensive study to identify the best ways to substantially reduce inefficient use of emergency rooms for dental care.

EXPANDING VERMONT'S ORAL HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE

• **Recruitment** - Over the last 10 years, Vermont has maintained a consistent oral healthcare workforce. More must be done, however, to meet long-term needs as the population grows and dentists retire.

Recommendations:

- Support the residency program at the University of Vermont Medical Center. A majority of dentists who come to Vermont for residency stay and practice here.
- VSIDS' recruitment program attracts highly skilled dentists. The dentists of the VSIDS will invest in expanding this program in 2015.
- Work with the University of New England's College of Dentistry to expand educational opportunities targeting Vermonters.

• **Increasing Expanded Function Dental Assistants (EFDAs)** - Vermont has a nationally accredited educational program to train EFDAs, who can expand the efficiency and productivity of a dental team. There are more than 40 EFDAs currently in Vermont. More are needed to expand capacity statewide.

Recommendation: The VSIDS will enhance efforts to increase the integration of EFDAs into dental practices.

PREVENTION

Expand the use of Fluoride - Fluoridation is one of the most effective choices communities can make to prevent health problems and improve the oral health of residents. Vermonters can receive important dental benefits by drinking fluoridated water. Every \$1 spent on fluoridation saves \$38 in dental treatment³. For about the same cost of one dental restoration, a lifetime of fluoridation can be provided per person.

Recommendation: The VSDS will work with the Legislature to encourage communities to participate in community fluoridation.

³CDC <http://www.cdc.gov/fluoridation/basics/index.htm>



To learn more about the Vermont State Dental Society
and our VT Action for Dental Health visit:

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