

The Vermont Department of Health's Office of Oral Health:

Office of Oral Health is staffed by:

- Oral Health Director
- Public Health Dental Hygienist III
- Public Health Dental Hygienist II
- Program Administrator
- Epidemiologist/Evaluator

In addition, six of the 12 District Health Department Offices have Public Health Dental Hygienist I positions. These are currently located in Bennington, Burlington, Brattleboro, Morrisville, Newport, and St. Albans.

Major Programs and Initiatives:

Community Water Fluoridation: Community water fluoridation is an evidenced-based preventive public health approach to cavity prevention.

- Provide the public, policy makers and water operators with scientific reviews and technical assistance to understand and assess the science behind community water fluoridation.
- Provide operational, technical, educational and financial support for water operators in our existing 29 public systems to ensure their communities are receiving the optimal level of fluoride for prevention of tooth decay. We also provide grants to communities interested in pursuing community water fluoridation.
- Currently 57% of eligible communities in Vermont (those with over 500 connections) fluoridate their water systems.

The Public Health Dental Hygienist Program:

- Public Health Dental Hygienists (PHDH) are currently employed in half the District Health Department Offices.
- PHDH promote oral health for families enrolled in the WIC program.
- PHDHs work directly with families to provide oral health education, fluoride varnish applications, and connection with a local dental practice.
- An estimated 800 children and 120 pregnant women (all WIC recipients) were served by this program in 2014.

The Tooth Tutor Program:

- Approximately 30 Tooth Tutor Dental Hygienists are working in 100 schools, and all seven Head Start programs throughout the state.
- The program connects children who have not accessed dental care in the previous year with a local "dental home" where they can receive comprehensive dental care, including dental sealants (an evidenced-based preventive measure). Tooth Tutors also provide classroom dental health education.
- During the 2013 -2014 school, year 94 elementary schools participated in the Tooth Tutor program; approximately 19,770 children benefited from classroom dental health education, and 1,570 children were connected with a local dentist through the program.

Workforce: Dental Recruitment/loan repayment/scholarships: The Office of Oral Health (OOH) works with the Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) Program, and the Vermont State Dental Society (VSDS) to recruit and maintain an adequate oral health workforce in Vermont.

Oral Health Surveillance: In addition to ongoing evaluation and monitoring of oral health programs (e.g., CWF, PHDH, Tooth Tutor), the Office of Oral Health also collects data to monitor the population's oral health status and health behaviors.

- Every 3 to 5 years we conduct an oral health survey of Vermont children; the latest survey was completed during the 2013-2014 school year.
- In 2013 we conducted a baseline survey to determine the oral health of older adults living in nursing homes; this is the first time we have collected data on the oral health of aging Vermonters.
- Every 2 years the Vermont Department of Health conducts a dental health workforce survey that is used to predict existing and future workforce shortfalls or surplus and to assess the distribution of a potential need for dental specialists.

Collaboration with other Health Department and Agency of Human Services Programs:

- Tobacco Control Program to engage dental providers in providing tobacco cessation services for their patients and to connect pregnant women insured by Medicaid who call 802Quits with a local source of dental care.
- Maternal and Child Health Program to reach our shared objective of increasing the percentage of pregnant women who access dental care during pregnancy and with Children's Integrated Services at the Department of Children and Families to help children 0-5 access care.
- Department of Vermont Health Access to achieve our shared goals of increasing the percentages of children insured by Medicaid who access preventive dental care such as dental sealants.

Vermont Oral Health Coalition: The OOH coordinates and funds the Vermont Oral Health Coalition (VOHC). The OOH worked with VOHC to develop the 2014 Vermont Oral Health Plan