Helping Maryland Smile

The Fiscal Year 2009 Report of the
Office of Oral Health

Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Family Health Administration

Martin O'Malley, Governor • Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor • John Colmers, Secretary
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The Office of Oral Health is charged with developing statewide oral health preventive and educational strategies to decrease oral disease, conducting oral health surveys of the State’s school children, and providing grant funding for the establishment of local oral health programs targeted to populations at high-risk for oral disease.

MISSION The mission of the Office of Oral Health (OOH) is to improve the oral health status of Maryland residents through a variety of public oral health initiatives and interventions, characterized by a focus on health promotion and disease prevention. The OOH develops, promotes, and advocates statewide cost-effective preventive and educational activities and policies that demonstrate and define the role of oral health as part of one’s overall systemic health and quality of life. The OOH partners with other State agencies, local health departments, schools, community agencies, and private providers in developing policies, programs, and activities to address:

- **Oral Health Education and Literacy**: To increase Marylanders’ knowledge and understanding of the importance of oral health in order to promote positive choices in personal hygiene, diet, and access to care behaviors.

- **Access to Dental Care**: To ensure all Marylanders have access to a dental home.

- **Oral Disease and Injury Prevention**: To prevent, or improve the current status of unmet and untreated oral diseases and oral injuries of Marylanders.
RESULTS OF THE SCHOOL CHILDREN DENTAL SURVEY

The Office of Oral Health (OOH) undertook its last survey of the Oral Health Status of Maryland School Children in 2005-2006, and determined that:

- **31** percent of all children (K and third grade) had untreated dental decay;
- **27** percent of children in kindergarten and third grade had at least one tooth with a dental sealant; and
- The Eastern Shore had the highest percentage of untreated dental decay (**39** percent) followed by the Central Baltimore region (**34** percent).

As a result, the OOH has focused recent efforts to ensure that there is an adequate safety net system of education, prevention and treatment service available through public health dental clinics. The office also has emphasized outreach services at programs such as Head Start and preventive school-linked dental services. Further, in FY09, OOH increased its support for Baltimore City and the Eastern Shore of Maryland in its efforts to increase services to underserved and at-risk patients.

“Although dental problems don’t command the instant fears associated with low birth weight, fetal death or cholera, they do have the consequence of wearing down the stamina of children and defeating their ambitions.”

Jonathan Kozol, Savage Inequalities
Office of Oral Health Programs

In FY 2009, oral health grants were awarded to 22 local health departments to develop or support community-based and school-based preventive, treatment, and educational and outreach programs for oral health. OOH funding contributed to two new local health department clinical dental programs in 2008 in Harford and Charles counties.

**Clinical Services Provided**

Since FY 2002, the OOH has significantly increased oral health services to Maryland residents.

**Clinic Appointments:** OOH grants contributed to 19,527 children and 2,186 adult clinical visits in FY 2009 (See Table 1 and 2). Overall, as reported to State Stat (a performance-measurement and management tool implemented by Governor Martin O'Malley to make our state government more accountable and more efficient), 40,340 children clinical visits were provided statewide at local health departments in FY09.

FY 2009 showed rapid growth in clinical services provided to children with 19,527 children’s dental clinic visits compared to 9,578 in FY08. (See Table 1)

![Table 1: Children's Dental Clinic Visits](image)
Significant progress in the provision of oral health services was found in the increase in the number of adult clinical visits. The number of adult dental clinic visits increased from 99 visits in FY02 to 2,186 adult visits in FY2009. (See Table 2)

Table 2: Adult Dental Clinic Visits

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Visits</th>
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<td>FY02</td>
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Sealants: **2,425** children received pit-and-fissure sealants through school-based sealant programs organized and implemented by local health departments supported by OOH funding. The majority of school sealant programs target second graders since the first permanent molars appear around the age of six. As reported to State Stat, 19,068 children statewide received dental sealants as part of local health department programs in FY09.

Fluoride Treatment: **3,845** children received a fluoride treatment in FY2009 through support by OOH funding. Local health departments partnered with schools and community programs to provide this service to school-aged children. Statewide, as reported to State Stat, 24,227 children received a fluoride treatment as part of local health department programs in FY09.
EXPANDING CLINICAL ORAL HEALTH SERVICES

The following Community Access Programs received Office of Oral Health funding to expand their programs and provide education, screening, and improved access to clinical oral health services in a number of local jurisdictions.

- **Helping Up Mission (HUM)** in Baltimore City provides dental services to HUM homeless residents to increase their potential for employment.

- **Choptank Community Health Systems, Inc.** provides dental services in a hospital operating room at the Dorchester General Hospital and serves residents of Talbot, Caroline and Dorchester Counties.

- **Carroll County Local Health Department** provides pediatric dental services for low-income Carroll County children.

- **Charles County Local Health Department** provides adult dental services for low-income Charles County adults and seniors.

- **Howard County Local Health Department** arranges for pediatric dental services for low-income children at Chase Braxton Health Services, Inc., a Federally Qualified Health Center.

- **Prince George’s County Local Health Department** provides pediatric dental services for low-income Prince George’s County children.

- **Worcester County Local Health Department** provides support for preventive dental services for low-income Worcester County children through an expansion of the fluoride varnish program, education of medical providers about fluoride varnish, and provision of oral health services for children.
MARYLAND ORAL CANCER PREVENTION AND EDUCATION

The Maryland Oral Cancer Prevention and Education Initiative is a multifaceted program that establishes the following: 1) educational programs to instruct healthcare providers about how to perform an oral cancer exam; 2) oral cancer screening programs designed to detect oral cancer lesions early; and 3) promotion of smoking cessation programs. Since 2001, OOH has awarded grants to local health departments to develop programs based on the three programmatic goals listed above. In FY 2009, 6 counties received the second year of a two year grant program for oral cancer programs.

ORAL CANCER PREVENTION AND EDUCATION INITIATIVE GRANTS

**Healthcare Provider Education:** 72 healthcare providers received education about oral cancer. Healthcare providers targeted for education were: dentists, dental hygienists, physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants.

**Oral Cancer Screening:** 819 adults were screened for oral cancer. Of these, 19 people had suspicious lesions, and 10 people were referred to a surgeon for a biopsy. There were no cases of oral cancer detected.

**Smoking Cessation:** 347 adults were referred to smoking cessation programs.

OOH collaborated with the Center for Health Promotion, Education, and Tobacco Use Prevention Program and included information about the Maryland Tobacco Quitline. Local oral cancer programs sponsored radio and television public service announcements as well as newspaper advertisements and community education sessions.

EASTERN SHORE ORAL HEALTH EDUCATION AND OUTREACH PROGRAM

The OOH established this program to serve vulnerable at-risk populations residing on Maryland’s Eastern Shore. This program provides Head start oral health screenings and case management, education, and fluoride rinse services for children in this region.
DEAMONTE DRIVER DENTAL PROJECT—MOBILE DENTAL VAN

The Deamonte Driver Project provides diagnostic, preventive, and simple restorative dental services to low-income students in eight schools in Prince George’s County and in one Montgomery County school. In FY09, the Office of Oral Health partnered with the Robert T. Freeman Dental Society Foundation to deliver school-based oral health care services and provide a dental home where there are no available dental services. Approximately 700 children received dental services on the van with a majority of children referred to the new community dental network of Medicaid providers. This network of “Dentists in Action” was developed by the Project by which enlisted local dental providers participating in the Medicaid dental program offer complex dental treatment for children unable to be treated directly on the van.

Maryland Dent-Care Loan Assistance Repayment Program

In 2000, the Maryland General Assembly created a loan repayment program for dentists known as the Maryland Dent-Care Loan Assistance Repayment Program (MDC-LARP). The purpose of the MDC-LARP is to increase the number of dentists providing oral health care services to Medicaid recipients. Each year, up to five Maryland dentists are selected to participate in the program for a period of three years. The dentists selected to the program receive $99,000 in educational loan repayment over a three-year period. In return for the loan repayment, dentists commit to provide at least 30 percent of their total patient services to the Medicaid recipient population per year.

OHH, in partnership with the Maryland Higher Education Commission, administers this program. OOH monitors participants on a monthly basis to ensure compliance with program goals, reviews all applications, convenes the review panel, promotes the program, gathers feedback from award recipients, conducts initial and yearly site visits, and provides an orientation for new program participants.

In calendar year 2009, a total of 13 dentists participated in the program, 5 of whom will complete their obligation in December 2009. In January 2010, 5 new MDC-LARP dentists will start the program and will continue through December 2012. By July 2009, MDC-LARP dentists provided 12,261 Medicaid recipient appointments for oral health services.
Access to Care: Reform Efforts

**DENTAL ACTION COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Dental Action Committee (DAC) was formed by Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) Secretary, John Colmers, in June 2007 in response to continuing concerns regarding access to oral health care services. The Office of Oral Health provided key support to the DAC in its efforts to fulfill its charge to develop a series of recommendations. After a careful review of data and best practices, the DAC developed seven principle recommendations for the Secretary to act upon. It is the intent of these recommendations to establish Maryland as a national model of oral health care for low-income children.

1. Initiate a statewide single vendor dental Medicaid **Administrative Services Only (ASO)** provider for Maryland.

   - Doral Dental Services was awarded the contract, and begins operations on July 1, 2009. This new Medicaid dental program was named the “Maryland Healthy Smiles Program.”

2. Increase **dental reimbursement rates** to the 50th percentile of the ADA’s South Atlantic region charges for all dental codes.

   - A total of $14M (half state and half federal matching funds) was allocated in FY 2009 as the first of three installments needed to achieve the rate increase goals. The first round of rate increases, targeted to preventive codes, went into effect on July 1, 2008 with additional rate increases planned for the future, budget permitting.

3. Maintain and enhance the **dental public health infrastructure** through the Office of Oral Health by ensuring that each local jurisdiction has a local health department dental clinic or a community oral health safety net clinic and by providing funding to fulfill the requirements outlined in the Oral Health Safety Net legislation.

   - A total of $2M was included in the FY 2009 budget to enhance the oral health safety net and infrastructure. In August 2008, OOH awarded three major grants to serve four counties identified as among those most in need. Numerous other grants were awarded to other jurisdictions to further support existing oral health safety net clinics and school-linked dental programs.
4. Establish a public health level dental hygienist to provide screening, education and preventive dental services within their scope of practice in public health settings.

   ♦ Enabling legislation passed during the 2008 legislative session and went into effect October 1, 2008 (SB818/HB1280).

5. Develop a unified and culturally and linguistically appropriate oral health message for use throughout the state to educate parents and caregivers of young children about oral health and the prevention of oral disease.

   ♦ On September 1, 2008 a DAC sub-committee recommended that DHMH secure funding and retain an outside expert vendor to design, implement, and evaluate a unified oral health literacy education plan focused primarily on prevention. The recommendation included further details and identified 22 possible funding sources and 34 possible expert vendors. On December 15, 2008, DHMH submitted a $2.5M federal priority funding request to Maryland’s Congressional delegation.

6. Incorporate dental screenings with vision and hearing screenings for public school children or require dental exams prior to school entry.

   ♦ The DAC Dental Screening in Public Schools sub-committee has designed a proposed model to incorporate dental screenings in public schools. The first dental screenings are tentatively targeted for the 2010-2011 school year.

7. Provide training to dental and medical providers to provide oral health risk assessments, educate parents/caregivers about oral health and to assist families in establishing a dental home for all children.

   ♦ DHMH, state health professional associations, and the University of Maryland Dental School, have worked together to provide short and long term CE courses to approximately 300 dentists and physicians in Maryland. In addition, a Baltimore City Pilot Project to train pediatricians to perform oral health risk assessments and apply fluoride varnish to Medicaid-insured children was successfully completed.
**Increasing Access to Care**

The following 3 projects, selected through a competitive request for proposals, will provide and/or facilitate comprehensive clinical dental services for the public and will establish dental homes in communities to ensure the consistent availability of dental services in 4 counties, which had no dental public health programs.

- **Calvert Memorial Hospital** targets services to low-income Medicaid children in Calvert County and coordinates care for improved oral health.

- **Kent and Queen Anne’s County Health Departments** increase access to comprehensive oral health services and enhance dental capacity for low-income children by creating mobile dental teams and providing transportation to regional dental homes.

- **Worcester County Health Department** focuses on creating quality, comprehensive, and sustainable oral health education, prevention, and treatment services for Medicaid and low-income, uninsured children.

**Capital Grant Program**

Capital Grant funds were awarded through a competitive RFP process to Worcester County Local Health Department to establish a 3-chair community dental facility in a renovated county facility. This funding is instrumental in increasing the number of Maryland residents in this region with access to a dental home.

**Fluoride Varnish Trainings**

OOH coordinated 10 Fluoride Varnish and Oral Health Screening Training Sessions (including 1 pilot) for Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) Medical Providers in Maryland, which enabled licensed EPSDT Pediatricians, Family Physicians and Nurse Practitioners to become eligible for Medicaid reimbursement for fluoride varnish application. 408 providers from all over the state attended these trainings, 345 of which are now Fluoride Varnish certified.
Promoting Oral Health for Marylanders

Oral health is an integral and significant component of health. The medical consequences of poor oral health include infection, pain, and impaired eating ability. These consequences can lead to poor nutritional status and poor overall health. In addition to these physical effects, poor oral health can lead to speech difficulties, unpleasant appearance affecting self-esteem, and an inability to concentrate due to pain. For children, this pain negatively impacts their readiness to learn and to succeed in school. Since dental disease occurs frequently and treatment is more expensive than prevention, educating parents and children has a health and economic benefit.

DEVELOPMENT AND DISTRIBUTION OF EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

As a method of increasing the oral health literacy of Maryland residents, the OOH developed materials for distribution to local health departments, clinics, schools, and private citizens. In FY09, OOH received 400 requests for materials and distributed 77,000 educational pieces as part of OOH outreach efforts. Highlights of these efforts include:

- OOH provided 10 brochures targeted towards educating the public on good dental hygiene techniques; 5 brochures were available in both English and Spanish.
- Lift the Lip Brochure - This insert was developed to accompany a new WIC “Tips for Healthy Teeth” brochure. English and Spanish versions are available.
- Maryland Passport to Good Health — Provided patients with a record-keeping tool to ensure that timely dental care is maintained.
- Oral Health Resources - Updated the Oral Health Resource Guide which assists public schools, administrators, and others in finding public health dental services located throughout Maryland.

Additionally, OOH provided sample educational materials to out-of-state partners in California, Georgia, Kansas, Michigan, and Washington D.C., and made educational materials accessible via the Office of Oral Health website at fha.maryland.gov/oralhealth/.
NATIONAL CHILDREN’S DENTAL HEALTH MONTH

National Children’s Dental Health Month (CDHM) is in February of each year. The Office of Oral Health supports local promotional efforts by developing promotional packages aimed at raising awareness of the importance of oral health for children. In FY 09, the Office of Oral Health:

- Supported Community Health Centers and Local Health Department dental program promotional efforts;
- Piloted a new interactive bulletin board display in selected Eastern Shore libraries and daycare centers; and
- Made CDHM promotional materials accessible via the OOH website (http://fha.maryland.gov/oralhealth/OH_factsheets.cfm).

“You’re not healthy without good oral health.”
C. Everett Kopp, M.D., Former United States Surgeon General

ORAL CANCER AWARENESS WEEK

Each year, OOH promotes Oral Cancer Awareness during the month of June. During FY 2009, Governor O’Malley proclaimed June 21-27, 2009 the ninth annual Maryland Oral Cancer Awareness Week (OCAW). OOH promoted OCAW by partnering with the Center for Health Promotion, Education, and Tobacco Use Prevention Program and supporting local educational and promotional efforts. OOH also developed new oral cancer educational materials for OCAW 2009 and distributed them to local partners. These materials can be found on the Maryland Oral Cancer website (www.maryland-oralcancer.org).
Partnerships

In addition to providing funding for oral health programs at the local level, OOH works to foster partnerships and improve the dental public health infrastructure in Maryland. A sampling of Office of Oral Health local, state, and federal partners whose efforts improve the oral health of Maryland residents include the following:

♦ **Maryland Foundation of Dentistry for the Handicapped:** OOH provides funding to this group to coordinate the provision of free dental care to disabled and elderly Maryland residents who cannot afford needed dental treatment and are not eligible for public assistance.

♦ **Maryland Oral Health Association (MOHA):** OOH works with MOHA to promote and improve the health and well being of Maryland residents through State and local oral health programs. MOHA members include local health departments, State facilities, federally qualified health centers, educational institutions, and other public oral health programs.

♦ **Mid-Atlantic P.A.N.D.A. (Prevent Abuse and Neglect through Dental Awareness) Coalition:** OOH continues to support the efforts of the Mid-Atlantic P.A.N.D.A. Coalition along with other key partners to ensure that dental providers are aware and able to recognize signs of abuse and neglect.

♦ **Head Start and WIC:** OOH provides funding for dental screenings for children in Head Start and Early Head Start programs. OOH also worked with WIC to create oral health educational materials to be distributed with WIC nutritional pamphlets.

♦ **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s State-Based Oral Disease Prevention Program:** In FY09, the Office of Oral Health applied for and received a competitive 5-year cooperative agreement for an estimated $1.2 million over five years. Highlights of this partnership include strengthening OOH support to school based sealant programs as well as community water fluoridation efforts. Additionally, the cooperative agreement will support OOH efforts to strengthen disease surveillance and oral epidemiology, increase evidence-based prevention programs, and further strengthen community partnerships.
OFFICE OF ORAL HEALTH
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For More Information on the Office of Oral Health and its programs, please visit:
http://fha.maryland.gov/oralhealth/

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