



Dental Public Health Project/Activity Descriptive Report Form

Please provide a detailed description of your **successful dental public health project/activity** by fully completing this form. Expand the submission form as needed but within any limitations noted. Please return completed form to: lcofano@astdd.org

NOTE: Please use Arial 10 pt. font.

CONTACT PERSON PREPARING THE SUBMISSION AND TO ANSWER QUESTIONS

Name: Kami A. Piscitelli, BSDH, RDH

Title: Special Needs Oral Health Coordinator

Agency/Organization: Virginia Department of Health

Address: 109 Governor Street, Madison Building, Richmond, VA 23219

Phone: (804) 864-7804

Email Address: Kami.Piscitelli@vdh.virginia.gov

PROVIDE CONTACT INFORMATION FOR ONE ADDITIONAL PERSON WHO COULD ANSWER QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS PROGRAM

Name: Tonya Adiches, BSDH, RDH

Title: Dental Health Programs Manager, State Dental Director

Agency/Organization: Virginia Department of Health

Address: 109 Governor Street, Madison Building, Richmond, VA 23219

Phone: (804) 864-7774

Email Address: Tonya.Adiches@vdh.virginia.gov

SECTION I: ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Title of the dental public health activity:

[Virginia Online Directory of Dentists for Individuals with Special Health Care Needs and Young Children](#)

Public Health Functions* and the 10 Essential Public Health Services to Promote Oral Health:

Check one or more categories related to the activity.

"X"	Assessment
	1. Assess oral health status and implement an oral health surveillance system.
	2. Analyze determinants of oral health and respond to health hazards in the community
	3. Assess public perceptions about oral health issues and educate/empower them to achieve and maintain optimal oral health
Policy Development	
	4. Mobilize community partners to leverage resources and advocate for/act on oral health issues
	5. Develop and implement policies and systematic plans that support state and community oral health efforts
Assurance	
	6. Review, educate about and enforce laws and regulations that promote oral health and ensure safe oral health practices
X	7. Reduce barriers to care and assure utilization of personal and population-based oral health services
	8. Assure an adequate and competent public and private oral health workforce
	9. Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility and quality of personal and population-based oral health promotion activities and oral health services
	10. Conduct and review research for new insights and innovative solutions to oral health problems

*[ASTDD Guidelines for State and Territorial Oral Health Programs that includes 10 Essential Public Health Services to Promote Oral Health](#)

Healthy People 2030 Objectives: Please list HP 2030 objectives related to the activity described in this submission. If there are any state-level objectives, the activity addresses please include those as well.

HP 2030 Objectives:

Goal: Improve oral health by increasing access to oral health care, including preventive services.

Increase use of the oral health care system — OH-08

Reduce the proportion of people who cannot get the dental care they need when they need it — AHS-05

State Health Objective:

VDH will increase the proportion of active, licensed dental providers willing to provide dental care to Individuals with Special Health Care Needs (ISHCN) and maintain or increase the number of listings on the VDH Dental Health Program online dentist directory.

VDH staff will update 1 Dental Health Program online directory of providers who are willing to serve ISHCN in order to maintain the existing proportion of active, Virginia-licensed dental providers listed.

**Provide 3-5 Key Words (e.g. fluoride, sealants, access to care, coalitions, policy, Medicaid, etc.)
These will assist those looking for information on this topic:**

- Oral health care
- Access to care: Individuals with Special Health Care Needs
- Prevention: Individuals with Special Health Care Needs
- Individuals with Special Health Care Needs (ISHCN)
- Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN)

Executive Summary: Complete after Section II: Detailed Activity Description. Please limit to 300 words in one or two paragraphs.

Provide a brief description of the dental public health activity. Include information on: (1) what is being done; (2) who is doing it and why; (3) associated costs; (4) outcomes achieved (5) lessons learned, both positive and negative.

The Virginia Online Directory of Dentists for Individuals with Special Health Care Needs (ISHCN) and Young Children began with survey responses from dentists willing to provide services for ISHCN. This was the first step in developing an electronic database for people to locate dentists to serve ISHCN. The overall goal of the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) program is to increase awareness and education regarding ISHCN oral health for a wide variety of stakeholders and providers with the potential to make a difference in access to oral health care for ISHCN. In addition to the directory, the ISHCN dental program involves two main approaches to enhance and support the online directory's primary purpose of increasing access to care. VDH provides oral health trainings for direct service providers (DSPs) working in the Department of Behavioral Health and Disability Services (DBHDS) group homes for ISHCN and continuing education (CE) courses for dental providers regarding oral care for ISHCN. Strategic partnerships for these programs include the Virginia Dental Association Foundation, DBHDS, and the Virginia Health Catalyst. Costs include VDH dental staff salary and travel, IT website development and support, oral health resources development and printing, speaker fees and travel, course facility fees, online meeting software, and partners' administrative fees.

From 2009 to 2021, the directory listings have increased or remained stable, currently including 2,305 dentists representing approximately 41% of Virginia dentists. From 2011 to 2021, VDH provided 28 oral health trainings for 503 direct service providers (DSPs) working in the Department of Behavioral Health and Disability Services (DBHDS) group homes for ISHCN and 53 continuing education (CE) courses for 1,178 dental providers regarding oral care for ISHCN. This program is successful due to fostering multiple effective partnerships with open communication; utilizing engaging, knowledgeable speakers; and participant interest in the topic. As with all other programs and outreach efforts, the COVID-19 pandemic challenged plans for dental and DSP's trainings and led to the development and implementation of virtual courses.

SECTION II: DETAILED ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

Provide detailed narrative about the dental public health activity using the headings provided and answering the questions. Include specifics to help readers understand what you are doing and how it's being done. References and links to information may be included.

****Complete using Arial 10 pt.**

Rationale and History of the Activity:

1. What were the key issues that led to the initiation of this activity?

In July 27, 2007, multiple Virginia-based organizations convened *Strong Roots for Healthy Smiles: Virginia's Oral Health Summit on Children and Youth with Disabilities*, in Richmond. The event included support and funding from the Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors (ASTDD), the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, the Virginia Head Start Collaboration at Virginia Department of Social Services, the Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) Partnership for People with Disabilities, the Virginia Department of Health (VDH), and the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS). The summit welcomed 50 attendees, including family members (20%), advocates (10%), medical/dental providers (25%), and state/local agency representatives and officials (45%).

Suggestions or plans for action included:

- Dental provider CE related to oral health care specific to children and youth with disabilities
- Training for oral health providers and nurses while still in dental/nursing school
- Identify or develop oral health resources/materials for parents/caregivers of children and youth with disabilities
- Development of a state oral health resource website, including training opportunities and an online dentist directory of providers willing to provide care for children with disabilities
- Increase preventive services for children with disabilities by training non-dental providers to offer oral screenings, fluoride varnish applications, and oral health education
- Advocate for funding oral health services for adults with disabilities through Medicaid

Email kami.piscitelli@vdh.virginia.gov for a copy of the 2007 Summit final report.

2. What rationale/evidence (may be anecdotal) did you use to support the implementation of this activity?

The Virginia Oral Health Summit was the impetus for the VDH Dental Health Program to survey Virginia dentists regarding acceptance of children and youth with special health care needs (CYSHCN) in their practices.

3. What month and year did the activity begin and what milestones have occurred along the way? (May include a timeline.)

February 2008: VDH collaborated with the Virginia Dental Association (VDA) to create and submit a survey of dentists licensed in Virginia, which included asking if they accepted CYSHCN and/or children under three years of age in their dental office or clinic. In February 2008, the VDA approved mailing the survey and a cover letter to all dentists in VDH and VDA. Because it was too late to have the dentist surveys included in dentist license renewal for 2008, the letters went out later. The responses from local dental providers were the first step in developing an electronic database and website for parents/caregivers and providers to locate dentists. In addition, the project included the first of two annual CE courses presented by the VCU Department of Pediatric Dentistry focused on oral health care for CYSHCN and young children.

December 2008: The VDH Bright Smiles for Babies (BSB) program developed under the Targeted State Maternal and Child Oral Health Collaborative Service Systems (TOHSS) grant and focused on provider education and oral health preventive services for young children expanded to include CYSHCN. As part of this expansion, VDH hired a special needs oral health coordinator. The design, preparation, and sharing of new oral health educational resources and pilot oral health trainings specifically focused on CYSHCN began within the next few months.

June 2009: The second goal of Virginia's TOHSS grant was to improve access to oral health services for CYSHCN. The new searchable online directory of dentists willing to treat CYSHCN or young children went live for the first time, <https://apps.vdh.virginia.gov/livewell/findadentist/>. You can also access the directory via the VDH Dental Health Program page, <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/oral-health/>, and scroll down to the bottom of the page to "Find A Dentist."

2010: The directory was updated and included almost half of the licensed dentists in Virginia. In addition, the VDH Dental Health Program's website included multiple educational resources and links to more information about the care of CYSHCN. In addition, more CE courses were available for medical/dental providers, teachers, school nurses, parents and other caregivers, home visitors, social workers, and others working with CYSHCN. These course offerings continue through the present day.

September 2010 – present: The VDH Dental Health Program collaborated with the Care Connection for Children clinics in Southwest Virginia for VDH dental hygienists to provide oral screenings, fluoride varnish applications, anticipatory guidance, and dental referrals for CYSHCN in this most vulnerable part of the state due to limited numbers of dental providers. Dental referrals include a combination of direct referrals and a suggestion to check the VDH online directory. During this time, the ISHCN Oral Health Program became a distinct program within the VDH Dental Health Program, rather than an extension of the Bright Smiles for Babies Program.

2011-2016: VDH collaborated with the Virginia Dental Association Foundation (VDAF) to offer one and a half day CE courses with a focus on CYSHCN for dental providers, including hands-on demonstrations and a few hours of actual patient care hosted at free clinics around the state. Seventeen courses educated 379 dental providers and allowed some free dental services for 308 CYSHCN. Dentists attending the courses received information about the directory and were encouraged to add or update their listings.

2014-2016: VDH and VDAF sponsored additional CE courses focused on adults with special health care needs (ASHCN) and modeled after the CYSHCN course. Six courses educated 136 dental providers and 37 ASHCN received some free dental services.

2017-present: VDH developed a new CE course focused on dental care for all ages of individuals with special health care needs (ISHCN). VDH collaborated with VDAF, VCU Department of Pediatric Dentistry, and Virginia Health Catalyst. The course includes ten hours of didactic training and demonstrations of adaptive tools for in-office or at-home use. VDH discontinued the clinical portion of the course due to expense, logistical challenges, limited availability of host clinics, etc. An exciting addition to the course was the inclusion of a VCU pediatric dental resident to attend, provide input and assistance during the course, and give a one-hour CYSHCN case presentation. Due to COVID-19, VDH redesigned the courses as five 2-hour webinar sessions and continued to include the VCU pediatric dental residents. In 2022, the courses will start as webinar sessions and probably return to in-person later in the year. From January 2017 to June 30, 2021, 30 ISHCN CE courses and/or webinar sessions provided by VDH included 663 dental providers. Every course or course session includes a reminder for dentists to add their office information to the VDH directory and/or check their listing for accuracy periodically.

2017-present: A partnership with the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) started a new VDH course offering for direct support professionals working within group residential homes for ISHCN. From January 2017 to June 30, 2021, 28 Oral Health for ISHCN courses and/or webinar sessions provided by VDH included 503 direct support professionals, administrators, managers, and nurses. The course participants utilize the VDH directory of dentists to find dental providers serving their residents and refer dentists to the directory.

2019: During July and August 2019, the ISHCN oral health program successfully worked with internal epidemiological/evaluation staff and external partners to plan, design, and complete the first Basic Screening Survey (BSS) project to evaluate the oral health status and barriers to oral health care for ISHCN in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The survey included 425 ISHCN throughout the state. With the successful first ISHCN BSS in VA completed, the plan is to continue to administer this survey every five years to monitor changes. Despite limited comprehensive open-mouth, basic screening data at the state and federal level, ISHCN, parents/caregivers, medical/dental professionals, and other interested parties agree there are still definite barriers to good oral health for many ISHCN. VDH Dental Health Program staff presented the ISHCN BSS results during the virtual 2021 National Oral Health Conference.

2021: Listings on the directory remain as current as possible with monthly checks for online change or new listing requests, as well as encouragement during courses including dental providers. As of June 30, 2021, over 2,300 dentists have listings on the VDH online directory. This represents approximately 41% of dentists licensed and working in Virginia.

2022: VDH hopes to gain support from VDA and the Virginia Board of Health Professions to include another survey of dentists willing to provide care for ISHCN and young children with 2022 licensure renewal reminders.

The sections below follow a logic model format. For more information on logic models go to: [W.K. Kellogg Foundation: Logic Model Development Guide](#)

INPUTS	PROGRAM ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES
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1. What resources were needed to carry out the activity? (e.g., staffing, volunteers, funding, partnerships, collaborations with various organizations, etc.)
 - Prior to development of the VDH directory of dentists and throughout the formation of the VDH ISHCN Oral Health Program, federal grant funding helped VDH with support for services, such as IT, developing resources, staff salaries, speaker fees, travel expenses, and partners reimbursed for expenses.
 - Grants awarded from ASTDD, HRSA, MCHB (Title V, MCH Services, TOHSS project, Perinatal and Infant Oral Health Quality Improvement [PIOHQI project]), PHS, and CDC allow the VDH Dental Health Program to continue quality oral health projects.
 - Partnerships with VDA, VDAF, Care Connection for Children, Virginia Health Catalyst, DBHDS, VCU Department of Pediatric Dentistry, VCU Partnership for People with Disabilities, Virginia Board of Health Professions, DMAS, Head Start, WIC, school boards, local health departments, and many more, are the key to all of the oral health projects in Virginia.

INPUTS	PROGRAM ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES
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2. Please provide a detailed description the key aspects of the activity, including the following aspects: administration, operations, and services.

In February 2008, VDH collaborated with the VDA to create and submit a survey of dentists licensed in Virginia, which included asking if they accepted CYSHCN and/or children under three years of age in their practices. The survey gained approval by VDA in February 2008 to mail to all dentists with a cover letter from VDH and VDA. The responses from local dental providers were the first step in developing an electronic database and website for parents/caregivers and providers to locate dentists. In December 2008, the VDH Bright Smiles for Babies (BSB) program focused on provider education and oral health preventive services for young children expanded to include CYSHCN. As part of this expansion, VDH hired a Special Needs Oral Health Coordinator. The VDH Special Needs Oral Health Coordinator is responsible for addressing the dentist directory online change or new listing requests each month; planning, organization, and presentation of all ISHCN oral health courses; supporting and training the

VDH remote-supervised dental hygienists in dental care for ISHCN; and developing or updating new ISHCN oral health resources. The design, preparation, and sharing of new oral health educational resources and oral health courses specifically focused on ISHCN continues every year. Dentists attending CE courses receive information about the dentist directory and instructions on how to add or update their listing. Listings on the directory remain as current as possible but are not always accurate due to the self-reported nature of the dentists' information. VDH hopes to gain support from VDA and the Virginia Board of Health Professions to include another survey of dentists willing to provide care for ISHCN and young children with 2022 licensure renewal reminders.

INPUTS	PROGRAM ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES
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3. What outputs or direct products resulted from program activities (e.g., number of clients served, number of services units delivered, products developed, accomplishments)?

2009-2021:

- In June 2009, the VDH searchable online directory of dentists willing to treat CYSHCN or young children went live for the first time, <https://apps.vdh.virginia.gov/livewell/findadentist/>.
- As of June 30, 2021, 2,305 dentists have active listings on the VDH online directory. This represents approximately 41% of dentists licensed and working in Virginia.
- From February 2011 to June 2021, 53 ISHCN-related CE courses and/or webinar sessions provided by VDH included 1,178 dental providers. Every course includes a reminder for dentists to add their office information to the VDH online directory and/or check their listing for accuracy periodically.
- July-August 2019, the ISHCN oral health program successfully planned, designed, and completed the first Basic Screening Survey (BSS) to evaluate the oral health status and barriers to oral health care for ISHCN in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The survey included 425 ISHCN throughout the state. VDH Dental Health Program staff presented the ISHCN BSS results during the virtual 2021 National Oral Health Conference. The final report and infographic can be found here:

INPUTS	PROGRAM ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES
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4. What outcomes did the program achieve? (e.g., health statuses, knowledge, behavior, care delivery system, impact on target population, etc.) Please include the following aspects:

- a. How outcomes are measured
- b. How often they are/were measured
- c. Data sources used
- d. Whether intended to be short-term (attainable within 1-3 years), intermediate (achievable within 4-6 years), or long-term (impact achieved in 7-10 years)

Over the last twelve years, the VDH Dental Health Program has been diligently working to increase provider knowledge and access to care for all ISHCN. Every course provided and the number of attendees is added to the larger total of people educated about the best practices and suggestions to increase the quality of oral health care and dental care access for ISHCN. Training more people can lead to sharing information with peers and changes in attitudes toward special needs dentistry. Beyond attendee numbers and basic screening surveys, we also monitor the anecdotal reports from people working with ISHCN; reduced numbers of calls begging for help with finding a dentist; and number of dentists adding their names to Virginia's online directory. The long-term goal is for the numbers reporting lack of access to care for ISHCN to decrease on future BBS and national surveys with state data. A review of the CDC Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Data (BRFSS) and Disability and Health Data System specific data for Virginia can also be useful to track changes to oral health care access.

Budgetary Information:

1. What is the annual budget for this activity?

The annual budget specifically for this activity is currently \$1,615.00. This includes monthly staff time for database updates and promotion, and a percentage of telecommunication, fax, computer, internet and server fees.

ISHCN oral health coordinator Wages	\$ 550
10% of telecommunication, fax, computer, internet, and server fees	\$1,065
Estimated Total:	\$1,615

Startup costs for this activity vary greatly depending upon multiple factors including IT costs, access to dentists for information, and the number of dentists in a state. It is estimated that VDH spent roughly \$25,000 in IT costs and staff time to set up the initial database.

2. What are the costs associated with the activity? (Including staffing, materials, equipment, etc.)

In addition to the annual budget for the database listed above, other costs associated with the activity include the costs of contracting with partners for the virtual and in-person trainings; VDH staff travel expenses for the courses, and the hourly wages of the ISHCN oral health coordinator for course planning and participation. These courses prepare providers to care for ISHCN and young children, so they feel comfortable being added to the database as a provider for these populations. The courses range from \$45,000 to \$50,000 annually, depending on location and number of courses held.

Partner contracts for trainings	\$32,000
VDH staff travel expenses	\$800
ISHCN oral health coordinator wages	\$17,000
Estimated Total:	\$49,800

3. How is the activity funded?

Title V Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant Program funds support the VDH ISHCN Coordinator's wage hours and benefits. Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant Program funds cover the contracts with partners and the Coordinator's supplies, equipment and all other general staff costs.

4. What is the plan for sustainability?

Costs associated directly with this activity are minimal and sustainable with current grant funding. With support from VDA and the Virginia Board of Health Professions to include the survey of dentists willing to provide care for ISHCN and young children with licensure renewal reminders, staff time contacting providers and managing the list throughout the year would be greatly reduced to an annual task. In addition, as virtual platforms for trainings become more mainstream, opportunities exist to fully convert trainings to a virtual format, reducing costs considerably and making the projects more sustainable.

Lessons Learned and/or Plans for Addressing Challenges:

1. What important lessons were learned that would be useful for others looking to implement a similar activity? Was there anything you would do differently?

As with any project, especially those developed over years, there are many opportunities to learn.

- The most important lesson learned was to include as many partners as possible, so you can take advantage of the expertise and skills from each organization and their staff. This opens up ideas, possibilities for the future, and sustainability.
- The use of a well-qualified passionate speaker who can relate to audiences.
- Learn from mistakes and make changes as often as needed to get the product or result desired.

2. What challenges did the activity encounter and how were those addressed?

Challenges:

- Getting the word out to all ISHCN, caregivers, and families about the resources available to them.
- Language barriers or inability to communicate; Isolation; Lack of availability of technology.
- Many dental providers do not know the extent of issues related to access to care for ISHCN and are unwilling or too uncomfortable to provide dental care.

Solutions:

- Using multiple partner organizations, including caregiver and disability-specific communities, to share quality oral health information.
- Connecting to professional organizations to promote education and services for ISHCN.
- Creating workgroups to identify and address the needs of ISHCN through service projects.
- Encouraging the addition of more Medicaid providers.
- Example: The American Dental Association's Principles of Ethics & Code of Professional Conduct, November 2020.

"While dentists, in serving the public, may exercise reasonable discretion in selecting patients for their practices, dentists shall not refuse to accept patients into their practice or deny dental service to patients because of the patient's race, creed, color, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin or disability." Page 9, Section 4.A.

https://www.ada.org/~media/ADA/Member%20Center/Ethics/ADA_Code_Of_Ethics_November_2020.pdf?la=en

Available Information Resources:

- Share any models, tools, and/or guidelines developed by the program specifically for this activity that may be useful to others seeking additional information. Hyperlink resources if possible.
- Virginia's searchable online directory of dentists willing to treat CYSHCN or very young children: <https://apps.vdh.virginia.gov/livewell/findadentist/>.
- An overview of the Virginia ISHCN Program:
 - <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/oral-health/individuals-with-special-health-care-needs-program/>
- Multiple VDH resources from all dental health programs, including ISHCN booklets, fact sheets, and flyers, links, and toolkits:
 - <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/oral-health/resources/>
- State and National Data, including VDH ISHCN BSS 2019 Survey Results and Infographic:
 - <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/oral-health/data-and-statistics/>
- Email kami.piscitelli@vdh.virginia.gov for a copy of the final report from the July 2007 *Strong Roots for Healthy Smiles: Virginia's Oral Health Summit on Children and Youth with Disabilities*, or any questions regarding the VDH ISHCN program.
- For information regarding the current ISHCN continuing education courses:
 - <https://bit.ly/catalystevents> Virginia Health Catalyst resources and information:
 - <https://vahealthcatalyst.org/>

TO BE COMPLETED BY ASTDD	
Descriptive Report Number:	53008
Associated BPAR:	Oral Health Care of People with Special Health Care Needs
Submitted by:	Virginia Department of Health
Submission filename:	DES53008VAdentistdirectoryishcnandyoungchildren-2021
Submission date:	July 2021
Last reviewed:	July 2021
Last updated:	July 2021