



astdd

Where oral health lives

Demonstrating the Value of State Oral Health Programs

Wednesday, October 29, 2025

Today's Presenters



Matt Zaborowski,
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ASTDD Executive
Director



Chris Wood, RDH
ASTDD Deputy
Executive Director

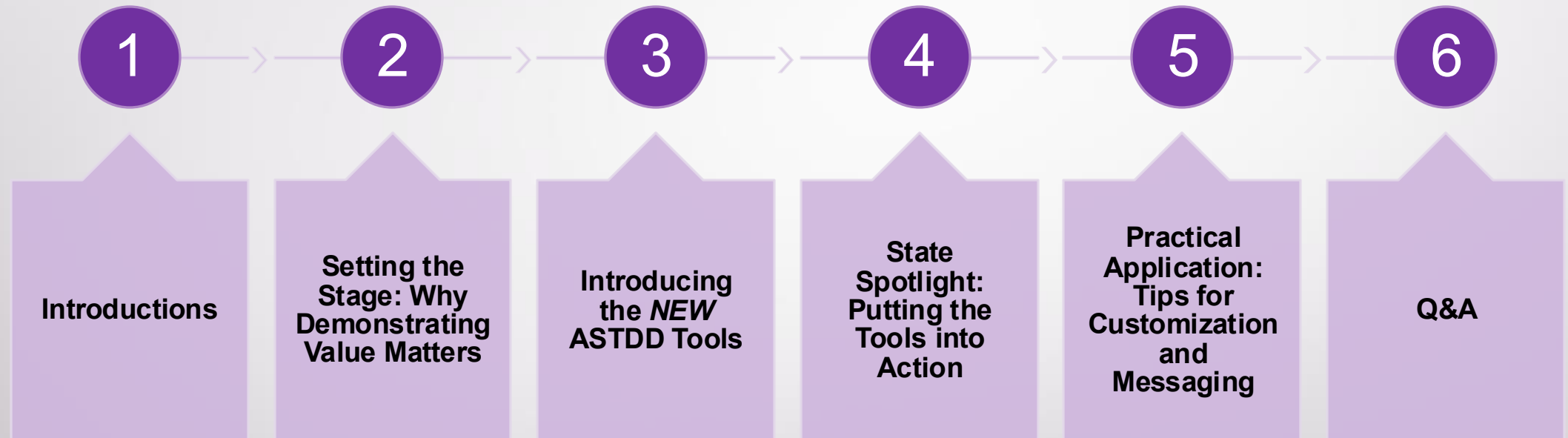


Grace Linn, MA, BS
Communications
Consultant



Robin Miller, RDH, MPH
VT State Dental Director
& ASTDD President-Elect

Agenda



Setting the Stage:

**Why Demonstrating
Value Matters**

Introducing the *NEW* ASTDD Tools



State Oral Health Programs:

Leaders in advancing oral health for all



About State Oral Health Programs

A State Oral Health Program (SOHP) is a unit of state government, typically within the public health department. SOHPs collaborate with **state and community partners** to carry out essential public health functions—such as monitoring oral disease rates, developing and implementing prevention programs, and ensuring policies and regulations protect the public's health. While every state's program varies in how it is funded and the services it provides, all SOHPs share the goal of improving oral health for all residents of a state. SOHPs:

- Monitor and report on oral health trends and disparities.
- Develop and implement policies and programs to prevent disease.
- Ensure regulations are in place to safeguard the public's health.
- Adapt services to meet the unique needs and resources of each state.

Driving Statewide Oral Health Impact

SOHPs provide leadership, expertise, and coordination to improve the health of their communities. They track and assess oral disease rates to identify progress and persistent disparities, while promoting prevention strategies and expanding access to affordable care. Using evidence-based practices, they shape policies

and programs that protect and improve health. By building strong partnerships across public and private sectors, they strengthen collective impact. SOHPs also ensure that states have a well-trained and adequate oral health workforce, and they continually evaluate services to measure effectiveness, reach, and quality.

Turning Plans Into Action

SOHPs improve overall health and quality of life through initiatives that combine **policy, prevention, and community support**. They collect and share data, guide planning, and ensure that evidence-based strategies reach the people who need them most. More specifically, they implement and advance:

- **Surveillance and planning:** statewide oral health data systems and improvement plans.
- **Prevention for children:** preschool and school-based programs providing fluoride varnish and dental sealants.
- **Community protection:** monitoring and promoting water fluoridation.
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Shows how SOHPs contribute to measurable results.



Why Oral Health Matters

Oral health is essential to overall health and quality of life from childhood through adulthood. Poor oral health impacts nutrition, speech, learning, self-esteem, and employment. It can also elevate risk for the prevalence and adverse outcomes of chronic conditions such as diabetes and heart disease. SOHPs help ensure that proven, affordable prevention strategies are available to everyone.



Nearly 1 in 3 U.S. children ages 2–4 have cavities, many untreated.



Many adults especially older individuals lack dental insurance or the means to pay for care.



Oral cancer claims more lives annually than ovarian, cervical, thyroid, or brain cancer.



Oral disease prevention is cost-effective—saving states and families millions in treatment costs.

Strong Partnerships, Stronger Impact

No state program can do it alone. SOHPs rely on a wide network of partners to extend their reach and strengthen their impact. These partnerships bring together expertise, resources, and community trust to create sustainable solutions. Key SOHP collaborators typically include:

- **Professional organizations:** state and local dental and dental hygiene associations, medical societies, and health systems.
- **Community providers:** health centers, tribal clinics, and hospitals.
- **Education partners:** schools, early childhood programs, and universities.
- **Coverage and policy groups:** Medicaid/CHIP programs, dental insurers, advocacy organizations, businesses, and policymakers.

Together, these partnerships improve access to care, reduce disparities, and promote lifelong oral health.

Oral health is health. State Oral Health Programs ensure everyone has the opportunity to live, learn, work, and age in good health.



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Oral Health is Health: *Why State Oral Health Programs Matter*

The Personal Side of Oral Health



The Challenge: Personal Burden in the U.S.

Education	Quality of Life	Overall Health
34 million school hours lost on average each year due to unplanned or emergency dental care. CDC, 2024	23% of low income adults avoid social activities due to the condition of their mouth and teeth. ADA Health Policy Institute	Gum disease linked strongly with heart disease and diabetes. Oral health is critical to overall health. CDC, 2019

Customize with your info

The Challenge: Personal Burden in [STATE]



Risk Behaviors, Chronic Disease, and Oral Health

Risk Behaviors, Chronic Disease, and Oral Health

The Challenge: A Hefty Price Tag



Dental spending accounts for **\$139.7 annually**, making it the second-highest healthcare spending category among all healthcare payers.

Source: Dieleman JL, Beauchamp M, Crosby SW, et al. Tracking US Health Care Spending by Health Condition and County. JAMA. Published online February 14, 2025. doi:10.1001/jama.2024.26790

Impact on Employment and Productivity in [STATE]

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Prevention Pays Off in [STATE]

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Oral Disease Reduces Employment and Productivity



29% of low-income adults say the appearance of their mouth affects their ability to interview for a job.

ADA Health Policy Institute



Untreated oral disease leads to \$46 billion in lost productivity in the U.S. each year.

CDC, 2024



Parents/caregivers lose 38 million productive hours annually due to children's oral pain or unplanned dental visits.

CareQuest Institute for Oral Health, 2024

Prevention Pays Off: Proven and Cost-Effective

Access to Care

Medicaid enrollees with no preventive dental visits are **8x more likely to have an ER visit for a dental condition.**

CareQuest Institute for Oral Health, 2022

Dental Sealants

School sealant programs could save up to **\$300M** by providing sealants to low-income children.

CDC, 2024

Fluoridated Water

Providing one year of fluoridated water in the U.S. **saves an estimated \$6.5 billion** in averted dental treatment costs.

CDC, 2024

From Medicaid to Military: The Cost of Inaction

- In [your state], Medicaid/CHIP spent \$XXXX on dental care in 2024.
- Dentists are the **second-most frequent prescribers of opioids**, contributing to \$78.5 billion in annual costs. ASTDD, 2021
- Annual costs of **\$3.4 billion to treat non-traumatic dental visits** in emergency rooms. CareQuest Institute for Oral Health, 2022
- Poor oral health among potential military recruits contributes to disqualification or requires expensive treatment. NIH, 2021

State Oral Health Programs (SOHPs)



Surveillance & planning



Prevention programs



Policy & regulation



Convening cross-sector partnerships



Workforce development



Public health education



Community based dental public health programs

Proof of Impact (Story)

Add a “human” story: family or community benefiting from SOHP services in your state

Proof of Impact (Data)

- Add state examples of improved oral health outcomes, especially among low-income and other at-risk populations
- Add other metrics: sealant rates, fluoridation coverage, workforce placements

Partnerships Amplify Results

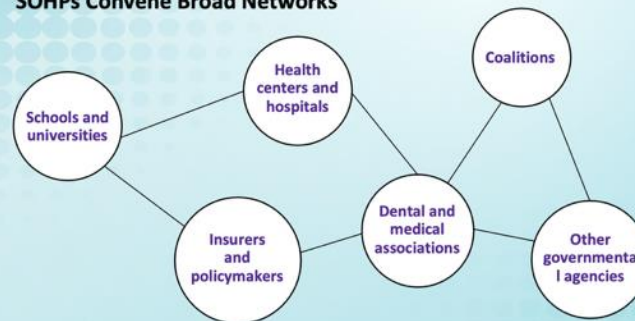


Partner Voices

Add quote here

Add quote here

SOHPs Convene Broad Networks



[STATE] Partners and Funders

Add logos here

Leveraged impact

- State funding for SOHPs **leverages impact** by unlocking federal grants, foundation funding, and in-kind partner contributions.
- Enables SOHPs to **convene coalitions and align efforts** across health systems, schools, insurers, and community organizations.
- Modest cost of SOPH translates to statewide prevention programs that **improve overall health** and **save dollars** in treatment costs.

Accountability to Funders



Using Data for Impact

- Demonstrate accountability to funders and policymakers
- Highlight disparities and target equity strategies
- Guide program design and policy
- Share transparent results with partners and the public



What it Takes for SOHPs to Succeed



Skilled leadership and staff



Partnerships to expand reach and sustainability



Stable or increased funding



Access to valid data



Policy support for prevention and workforce initiatives



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Add your state logo

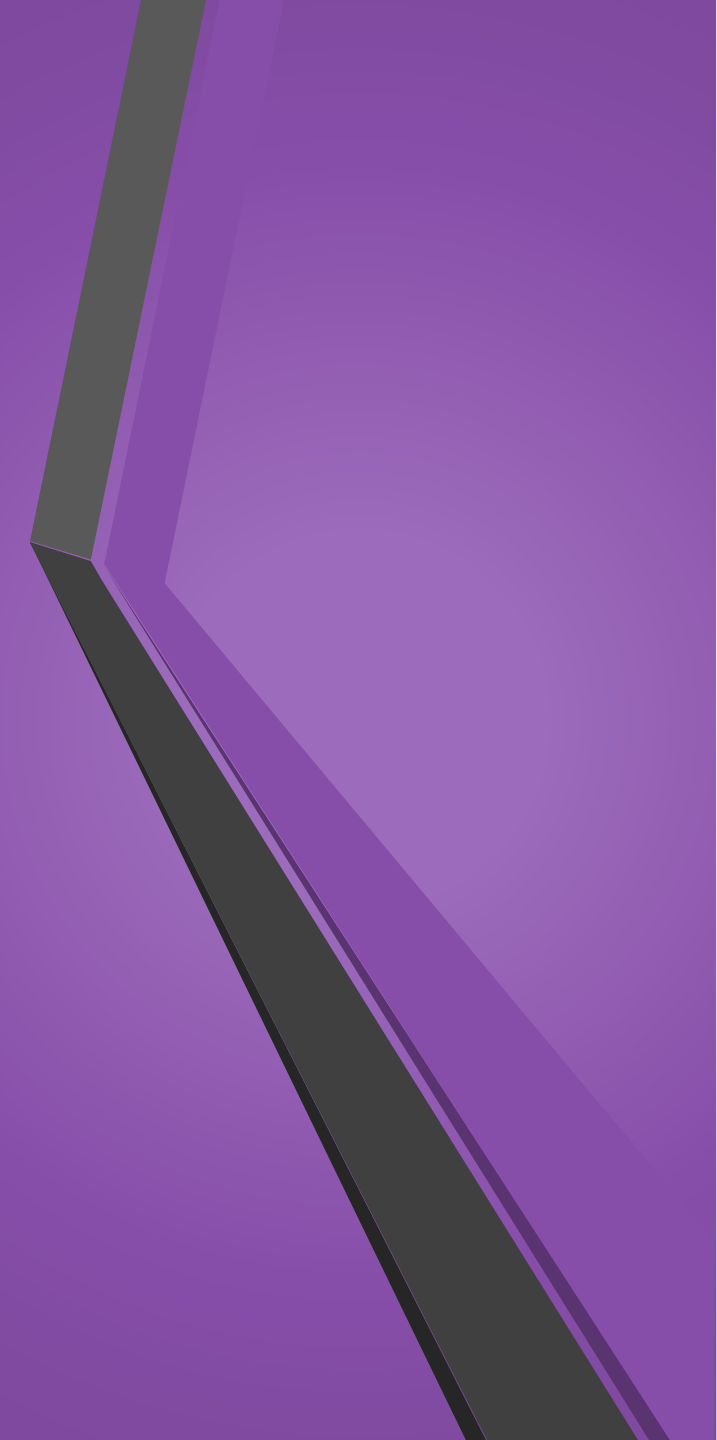
Oral Health is Health

Why State Oral Health Programs Matter





State Spotlight: Putting the Tools into Action



Practical Application: **Tips for Customization & Messaging**

It's **Your** Story!

- First and foremost, consider your audience and adjust content according to their needs and interests
- Think about the overall purpose of your communication effort and the desired outcome(s)
- Construct your story with a clear beginning, middle, and end
- Avoid jargon and keep it simple
- Include a call to action

Using Data

- Using local data, equity metrics, and program outcomes to strengthen your case
 - [ASTDD State Surveillance Data Reference Guide](#)
 - National OH data portal
 - Stories/storytelling to bring the data to life

Stories are Powerful

- Connects data to people
- Builds emotional resonance and urgency
- Illustrates outcomes and return on investment
- Bridges audiences
- Builds trust and credibility

Every chart, every number, every slide represents real people whose health depends on strong state oral health programs. Let's keep telling that story — and keep moving oral health forward.



Questions?

Please use the raise hand feature or the chat to ask any questions you may have.

Thank
You!

