



# LOUISIANA ORAL HEALTH STATE ACTION PLAN

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**2018-2023**

# Louisiana Oral Health State Action Plan

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# Louisiana Oral Health State Action Plan

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2018-2023 Louisiana Oral Health State Action Plan outlines the combined goals of the Louisiana Oral Health Coalition members to improve the oral health of the state's citizens. Coordinated efforts focus on increasing access to oral health services, creating policy changes to improve oral health, preventing the progression of oral disease through evidence-based interventions and supporting the recruitment and retention of a qualified oral health workforce.

The plan provides direction for achieving priorities set forth by key stakeholders representing individual oral health champions and multiple organizations from across the state. The intended benefits include networking, better utilization of resources, increased visibility of oral health issues and engaging new stakeholders. Over the next five years, the Louisiana Oral Health Coalition will sustain their commitment to accomplishing these strategies and activities.

### **Oral Health Equity**

ORAL HEALTH is essential to overall health and well-being. Oral health equity speaks to the opportunity for everyone to experience optimal dental health.

**Reducing oral health disparities is a primary goal for all of us.**

### **COVID - 19**

Since March 2020, all meetings and gatherings have transitioned to virtual settings. The LOHC will continuously promote the adherence to all CDC infection prevention and control guidelines for healthcare professionals in dental settings, including school sealant programs during the pandemic.

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# Louisiana Oral Health State Action Plan

## EFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS

### Well-Ahead Louisiana

Well-Ahead Louisiana, a chronic disease prevention and healthcare access initiative of the Louisiana Department of Health, works to improve the health and wellness of our residents. Well-Ahead Louisiana connects organizations and residents across the state to resources that make healthy living easily accessible.

The Oral Health Promotion program within Well-Ahead Louisiana works to increase oral healthcare access for all citizens in the state and deliver community-based prevention services to decrease the prevalence of oral disease. One of 20 states funded through the CDC's Division of Oral Health, Well-Ahead Louisiana uses CDC's best practices and focuses on improving and expanding School Sealant Programs (SSPs), Community Water Fluoridation (CWF) and Oral Health Surveillance.

### School Sealant Programs (SSPs)

The expansion of the school dental sealant program enrollment is accomplished through the Louisiana Seals Smiles school-based/linked program. This program uses dental Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) data to geographically target evidenced-based oral health interventions in schools. The target population includes 6-14 year old students attending elementary and middle high-need schools. A high-need school is one in which 50% of the students qualify for federal or state free and reduced lunch programs. Partnerships include Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), dental hygiene schools and any grassroots organizations that are able to execute a school-based sealant program.

#### Project Outcomes

Short-term:

- Increased enrollment of eligible schools, increased access to equipment for implementation
- Increased number of students receiving sealants on permanent molars

Intermediate:

- Increased sealant retention rate, increased public knowledge of the benefits of sealants
- Increased number of students referred to referral networks

### Community Water Fluoridation (CWF)

Currently, there are 49 total water systems with 5000+ water connections in Louisiana, only 32 of which include fluoride; 17 systems do not include fluoride. More than 2.1 million residents in Louisiana are served by community systems with optimally fluoridated water, which is 44% of the state's total population. Nearly 2.7 million residents in Louisiana are served by non-fluoridated community systems, which is 56% of the state's total population. Strategies are implemented to increase community engagement to promote CWF and to leverage funding for new initiation of fluoridated water systems, as well as fostering relationships with local government leaders and CDC-funded partners to support these efforts.

#### Project Outcomes

Short-term:

- Increased knowledge of water fluoridation management
- Increased number of inspected water systems, increased knowledge of the benefits of community water fluoridation
- Increased access to equipment for fluoridation operations and sealant program implementation

Intermediate:

- Increased percent of fluoridated community water systems within the state, increased percentage of adjusted water systems that maintain optimal fluoridation levels
- Increase proportion of people served by community water systems who receive optimally fluoridated water

### **Oral Health Surveillance**

There is a great need for oral health data collection within Well-Ahead Louisiana. Throughout this grant cycle, priorities will include identifying and leveraging opportunities and resources to maintain surveillance capacity. Some of these activities will include focusing on data collection at the state and local level, collaborating with internal agency programs that manage surveillance systems, integrating oral health with other chronic disease programs and analyzing, reporting and disseminating data in a timely manner.

#### **Program Outcomes**

Short-term:

- Increased capacity, enhanced collaboration, sustained targeted surveillance, and increased collaborative communications

Intermediate:

- Sustained monitoring of trends in oral health indicators, increased dissemination of oral health surveillance data on oral health disease, risk factors, and use of preventative oral health services
- Increase collaboration with other programs to expand oral health indicators.

Through this new five-year cycle of funding, Well-Ahead Louisiana intends to establish a consistent and standardized source for current and valid information used in the following ways:

- Assess the oral health burden in Louisiana by defining the scope of oral health needs and access to oral health services
- Monitor trends on oral health indicators and the utilization of preventative services
- Identify data and knowledge gaps; evaluate the effectiveness of implemented programs and policy changes, identify vulnerable population groups.

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# Louisiana Oral Health State Action Plan

## LOUISIANA ORAL HEALTH COALITION

The Louisiana Oral Health Coalition (LOHC) is a voluntary collaborative representing oral health stakeholders and leaders throughout Louisiana. The LOHC has made a commitment to improve oral health by utilizing available resources and research around evidence-based, best practices.

LOHC believes that every individual, community, and population are equally valuable and should be afforded the same opportunities to attain their highest level of oral, physical and mental health.

LOHC is committed to ensuring our network plays a primary role in increasing quality, comprehensive, and continuous oral health services for all Louisiana citizens throughout their life stages.

The State Action Plan development process is a collaboration between the LOHC members and Well-Ahead Louisiana Oral Health Promotion staff, a branch of the Louisiana Office of Public Health. Although this plan was originally developed in 2018, there is an annual review process in place to continuously receive input and feedback to refine the plan. The last update occurred in July 2021.

### Vision

A Louisiana where people of all ages have excellent oral health

### Mission

To coordinate the provision of information, resources, and services so that people of all ages can have excellent oral health.

### Core Components

The Coalition recognizes four main component areas through which their projects and services are focused. Member stakeholders work in collaboration to promote, educate and create policy within each area:

- **Access:** Increase access to quality, comprehensive, and continuous oral health services for all Louisiana citizens throughout their life stages.
- **Policy:** Influence policy, environmental or systems change and maintain continuous visibility to support, advocate and collaborate on relevant oral health matters.  
– *Policy Workgroup*
- **Prevention:** Improve and maintain oral health, and prevent the progression of oral disease through evidence-based interventions that address risk factors and at-risk populations.  
– *Prevention Workgroups: Dental Sealant Workgroup and Fluoride/Fluoridation Workgroup*
- **Workforce/Partnerships:** Support efforts to ensure the preparation, recruitment, and retention of an oral health workforce that is adequate and skilled, so that it may better serve the state's population.  
– *Workforce Workgroup*

## **Guiding Principles**

The 2018-2023 State Action Plan provides direction for achieving priorities set forth by key stakeholders representing individual oral health champions and multiple organizations from across the state. The intended benefits include networking, better utilization of resources, increased visibility of oral health issues and engaging new stakeholders. Over the next five years, the Louisiana Oral Health Coalition will sustain their commitment to accomplishing these strategies and activities using the following principles.

### **Where are we going?**

- Amend school rules to ensure dental checkups for kindergarten entry statewide.
- Modify Medicaid law to cover restorations and extractions for adults.
- Increase access to affordable oral health care in rural areas.
- Implement local oral health coalitions
- Seek 501c3 status
- Assemble an annual Oral Health Conference
- Foster partnerships
- Promote effective prevention interventions for children
- Endorse better care coordination

### **Primary Focus**

Oral health access in Louisiana is a greater unmet healthcare need among low-income children, older adults and individuals with special health care needs. The LOHC strives to create better opportunities for these populations through coordinating efforts to disseminate educational and informative resources to eliminate the prevalence of oral health disparities.

### How are we going to get there?

- Create and sustain intentional partnerships, such as, but not limited to:
  - State Dental Board
  - Dental and Hygiene Schools
- Conduct data analysis and report
  - Disseminate annual report card data
  - Provide resources on oral health at the regional level
- Continue state oral health prevention programs
- Identify legislative champions
- Work closely with national oral health networks/associations
- Realign organizational structure

### What is the most important priority moving forward?

- Annual Oral Health Summit
- Surveillance and Evaluation activities
  - Collection and reporting of data
- Oral health champions at the legislative branch
- Financing

### What should we be aware of/what is going to stand in our way?

- Lack of awareness of oral health
- Priority of oral health importance
- Limited resources
- Competing agendas between stakeholders
- Inadequate data
- Level of involvement

### Relevant Oral Health Data

- Dental care is the most prevalent unmet health need and is proven among low-income children, older adults and those with special health care needs
- The mouth and body are essential to one another—Recognizing that oral health is important to overall health
- Tooth decay is the most common chronic disease of childhood and it is preventable—it occurs five times more frequently than asthma and seven times more frequently than hay fever
- Louisiana has a high percentage of areas lacking a sufficient number of dental professionals, as 84% of the state is designated as a Dental Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA)
- Dental sealants, fluoride varnish applications and community water fluoridation are three effective interventions to increase access to oral health care
- Water fluoridation improves oral health, which is central to our overall health. It has been a preventive practice since 1945 (74 years) and is recognized by the CDC as one of the “10 great public health achievements of the 20th century.” Yet, Louisiana is ranked 45th nationally in the number of persons receiving fluoridated community water systems. Also, only 44% of Louisiana’s residents have access to fluoridate water, as opposed to the United States at 74%
- The economic factors that often relate to poor oral health include access to health services and an individual’s ability to get and keep dental insurance—oral health disparities are by far greater than other chronic diseases



# Louisiana Oral Health State Action Plan

## GOALS

Goals to be accomplished through the Louisiana Oral Health State Action Plan:

- Increase the public's perception of oral health and decision-maker awareness of the state's oral health status and evidence-based strategies and activities to address barriers, disparities, and costs.
- Promote the adoption of laws that increase access to school-based oral health education, screenings and preventive care.
- Promote preventative oral healthcare.
- Establish partnerships between medical and dental programs/practices to communicate, collaborate and coordinate approaches for integrating the importance of oral health and other chronic diseases.
- Support workforce initiatives specific to recruitment and retention of oral health workforce needs.

<b>GOAL 1</b>			
Increase the public's perception of oral health and decision-maker awareness of the state's oral health status and evidence-based strategies and activities to address barriers, disparities, and costs.			
<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>OBJECTIVE(S)</b>	<b>PARTNER(S)/Responsible Party</b>	<b>DATA SOURCES</b>
1. Disseminate LA specific oral health information to the public and decision-makers annually.	1. Publish (2) communication resource tools for promoting awareness of the state's oral health status. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Implement a continuous data tracking process to collect and report regional oral health data for adults and children to address barriers and access.</li> <li>▪ Develop fact sheet including 3-4 measures to include access, prevention, and advocacy to disseminate in January of each year.</li> <li>▪ Publish an Oral Health Report Card every three year prior to the convening of legislation session starting 2020.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ LOHC Executive Committee</li> <li>▪ Well-Ahead Louisiana</li> <li>▪ LDH Medicaid</li> <li>▪ OPH Health Informatics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Medicaid data</li> <li>▪ Eat-Move-Grow</li> <li>▪ Program records</li> <li>▪ Oral health tracker</li> </ul>
2. Launch Oral Health Week to educate child advocates on the impact of children's oral health annually.	1. Plan an annual Oral Health Day at the Louisiana State Capitol beginning March 2020. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Collaborate with partner organizations and student groups to display five informational booths each year.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ LOHC Executive Committee</li> <li>▪ LDA</li> <li>▪ LDHA</li> <li>▪ Well-Ahead Louisiana</li> <li>▪ Student Health Alliance</li> <li>▪ LSU School of Dentistry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Program records</li> <li>▪ Attendance sheets</li> </ul>

3. Continue to build and sustain partnership across the state to increase the capacity and visibility of the Coalition's network.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Organize an annual Oral Health Summit in different regions of the state with at least 100 attendees each year.</li> <li>2. Create at least two mini coalitions by year August 2023. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Annually assess new goals for two mini coalitions.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ LOHC Executive Committee</li> <li>▪ Oral Health Summit Planning Committee</li> <li>▪ Well-Ahead Louisiana</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Attendance sheets</li> <li>▪ Program records</li> <li>▪ Coalition documents</li> </ul>
4. Establish 501c3 status to financially support and improve the Coalition's mission and principles.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Convene the LOHC Executive Committee to initiate the 501c3 process by December 2019.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ LOHC Executive Committee</li> <li>▪ Well-Ahead</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 501c3 status</li> <li>▪ LOHC activity documentation</li> </ul>
<b>GOAL 2</b>			
Promote the adoption of laws that increase access to school-based oral health education, screenings, and preventive care.			
STRATEGY	OBJECTIVE(S)	PARTNER(S)/Responsible Party	DATA SOURCES
1. Implement pilot dental screening program policy for K-5 in four parishes (Caddo, EBR, Rapides & Natchitoches) by Aug. 31, 2020.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop proposed policy plan by September 2019 for piloted dental screening program.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ School board</li> <li>▪ Parents/guardians</li> <li>▪ Dentists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Program records</li> </ul>
2. Amend dental practice policy to broaden dental hygienist designation in school settings.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Partner with the Dental Hygienists' Association to better promote preventive practices by hygienists in schools.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ LOHC Executive Committee</li> <li>▪ LDHA</li> <li>▪ Well-Ahead Louisiana</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Review of the scientific literature</li> <li>▪ Review of policies/programs in other states</li> <li>▪ Program records documents</li> </ul>
3. Increase fluoride varnish application among medical providers per Medicaid Fluoride Varnish Policy.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assess and disseminate fluoride varnish outreach plans and materials annually each March.</li> <li>2. Evaluate and report annual data fluoride varnish use and outcomes each February.</li> <li>3. Survey and analyze health professionals applying fluoride varnish biannually.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fluoride/Fluoridation Workgroup</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ LDH</li> <li>▪ Survey data</li> </ul>
4. Expand Medicaid Fluoride Varnish Policy to include school setting.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Initiate policy change development by July 30, 2020.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fluoride/Fluoridation Workgroup</li> <li>▪ Well-Ahead Louisiana</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ LDH</li> <li>▪ Survey data</li> <li>▪ Program records documents</li> </ul>

<b>GOAL 3</b>			
Promote preventative oral healthcare.			
<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>OBJECTIVE(S)</b>	<b>PARTNER(S)/Responsible Party</b>	<b>DATA SOURCES</b>
1. Promote the implementation dental sealant programs statewide.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish and sustain a statewide dental sealant network by October 2018.</li> <li>▪ Initiate a sustainability process for school sealant programs statewide by January 2019.</li> <li>▪ Development of Sustainability Plan by April 2019.</li> <li>▪ Evaluate sustainability plan activities quarterly.</li> <li>▪ Develop an online dental sealant toolkit by February 2019.</li> <li>▪ Conduct at least one school dental sealant event per year.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dental Sealant Workgroup</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Program records</li> <li>▪ Dental sealant toolkit</li> </ul>
2. Promote community water fluoridation.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish and sustain a statewide Fluoride/Fluoridation Workgroup by November 2018 to plan, implement, and evaluate three activities annually.</li> <li>2. Launch an educational community campaign to reach various targeted groups to promote community water fluoridation and fluoride varnish annually.</li> <li>3. Secure funding to initiate fluoridation for one community water system annually.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fluoride/Fluoridation Workgroup</li> <li>▪ Well-Ahead Louisiana</li> <li>▪ LOHC Executive Committee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Program records</li> <li>▪ Education campaign documents</li> </ul>
<b>GOAL 4</b>			
Establish partnerships between medical and dental programs/practices to communicate, collaborate and coordinate approaches for integrating the importance of oral health and other chronic diseases.			
<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>OBJECTIVE(S)</b>	<b>PARTNER(S)/Responsible Party</b>	<b>DATA SOURCES</b>
1. Implement inter-professional engagement and practice among medical and dental students/early professionals.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Target at least one professional school per year for inter-professional initiative beginning January 2020. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Collaborate with partners for student engagement annually.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ LOHC Workforce Workgroup</li> <li>▪ LA Primary Care Association</li> <li>▪ Academia Institutions</li> <li>▪ LA AHECs</li> <li>▪ Well-Ahead Louisiana</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Program records</li> <li>▪ Attendance sheets</li> </ul>

**GOAL 5**

Support workforce initiatives specific to recruitment and retention of oral health workforce needs.

<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>OBJECTIVE(S)</b>	<b>PARTNER(S)/Responsible Party</b>	<b>DATA SOURCES</b>
1. Recruitment and retention of dental workforce.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Establish Workforce workgroup to implement Workforce Partner Program (2019-2022) by September 2019.</li><li>2. Promote utilization of online recruitment tools to recruit dental providers.</li><li>3. Plan annual lunch and learn to share resource and information.</li><li>4. Ongoing collaboration with LSU School of Dentistry on Rural Scholar Program.</li><li>5. Ongoing communication with the AHECs to implement recruitment and retention activities.</li></ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Workforce Workgroup</li><li>▪ Workforce Dental Consultant</li><li>▪ Well-Ahead Louisiana</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Program records</li></ul>

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## Louisiana Oral Health State Action Plan

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### **PARTNERS**

Arbor Family Health/Innis Community Health Center	Louisiana Department of Health - Medicaid
Capital Area Agency on Aging	Louisiana Diabetes Educators Network
Central Louisiana Area Health Education Center	Louisiana Rural Health Association
Children & Family Services, Head Start Program	Louisiana Rural Health Network
DentaQuest	Louisiana Rural Water Association
EatMoveGrow, Inc.	Louisiana Primary Care Association
EXCELth Inc.	Louisiana School Healthy Schools Collaborative
Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs	LSU Health Sciences School of Public Health
Health Centers in Schools	LSU Health Sciences Center Pediatrics (Shreveport)
Innis Community Health Center	LSU Health Sciences Center School of Dentistry
Just Kids Dental	MCNA Dental
Louisiana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics	New Orleans Dental Association
Louisiana Dental Association	Our Lady of Lake Pediatric Residency Program
Louisiana Dental Hygienists Association	Smiles on the Go
Louisiana Department of Education	Southeast Community Health
Louisiana Department of Education - Head Start Collaboration Office	Southeast Louisiana Area Health Education Center
Louisiana Department of Health - Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities	ULM, Department of Hygiene
	Well-Ahead Louisiana

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## Louisiana State Action Plan

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### **RESOURCES**

<http://www.wellaheadla.com/OralHealth>

<http://www.wellaheadla.com/LouisianaSealsSmiles>

<http://www.wellaheadla.com/Well-Ahead-Community/Community-Water-Fluoridation>



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