



## Oral Health Coalitions & Community Advocates: A Key Element of State and Local Oral Health Infrastructure

State oral health programs rely heavily on oral health coalitions and community advocates to create and implement state plans, promote evidence-based prevention and public health approaches and advocate for new policies and laws. State oral health infrastructure (organizational structure and support) is required to create and sustain prevention programs (e.g., dental sealants, fluoride varnish, community water fluoridation) and enable access to comprehensive and coordinated oral health services in communities--both lead to improved oral health and overall health for people of all ages. High levels of investment, expertise, political will and strong internal and external support are needed NOW to prevent erosion of public oral health programs by political, economic and other forces.

**Coalition members/ other advocates provide a voice for/ and a link to the community in the work of the state oral health program, thus building capacity to collaboratively address oral health challenges. What can you as an Oral Health Coalition Member or Community Advocate do right now to support state oral health infrastructure and capacity building?**

### Ten Key Recommendations for Coalition Members and Oral Health Community Advocates

- Help identify and procure diversified funding for state and local oral health programs and help leverage existing resources to support oral health programs and initiatives.
- Participate in developing a common vision and goals for oral health statewide and in local communities.
- Promote and support leadership and professional development opportunities to enhance skills to address oral health needs.
- Learn more about the [ASTDD Competencies](#) and [Guidelines](#) and programs consistent with them.
- Increase emphasis on dental public health issues in health professions education.
- Support high quality oral health data collection and tracking and use data to guide decision making, needs assessment, and evaluation of programs.
- Collaborate to integrate oral health data and other health data around interventions and messages.
- Engage in ongoing and strategic collaborative planning to address the oral health of the population throughout the lifespan and to promote health equity.
- Support public policies that promote oral health throughout the lifespan.
- Increase public awareness of oral health issues, evidence-based prevention methods, and effective programs among policymakers and the public.

## STATE ORAL HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE ELEMENTS



See additional resources on the ASTDD website: [astdd.org](http://astdd.org) and the American Network for Oral Health Coalitions (ANOHC) website: [anohc.org](http://anohc.org)

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