

Poster Number: 33 Title: Results of the First Year of Implementation of the Oral Health Certificate in Puerto Rico, presented at the 2021 Virtual National Oral Health Conference, April 2021.

Abstract:

Objective: In Puerto Rico (PR), the prevalence of Early Childhood Caries ranges from 47% to 53%, compared to 20% to 25% in the United States. In order to mitigate the oral health burden in the children population of PR, the government of PR passed the Law 63 of 2017. This law institutes mandatory oral examinations along with a compulsory Oral Health Certificate (OHC) for students at grades K, 2nd, 4th, 6th, 8th and 10th in public- or private schools. The task of monitoring the compliance of this law was assigned to the PR-Oral Health Program (PR-OHP). The aim of this study is to describe the process and Results of the first-year of implementation of the Law 63 of 2017.

Methods: A paper report system was developed to track the compliance of OHC reports. Frequency and percent were used to describe reports compliance at school year 2018-2019.

Results: A total of 539 (36.2%) school submitted the compliance report (364 public and 175 Private) and 30,574 students (23.2%) from public and 15,486 students (32.3%) from private school submitted the OHC.

Conclusion: Public-schools had a lower percent than private-school for OHC compliance. Unexpected events could influence this divergence, as the implementation was done one year after Hurricane María or that the Public-School System was in a middle of restructuration. The PR-OHP will be monitoring the compliance trend to observe if this difference persists. However, we consider the first year of OHC implementation to be a success.

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