



# Dental Public Health Activity Descriptive Summary

---

**Practice Number:** 07002  
**Submitted By:** Oral Health Unit, Prevention Services Division, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment  
**Submission Date:** September 2001  
**Last Updated:** January 2013

## Colorado Old Age Pension Dental Program

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Oral Health Program, administers a statewide, direct service oral health program for low-income seniors called the Colorado Old Age Pension Dental Assistance Program. The Colorado Dental Care Act of 1977 initiated the program, providing an alternative to the present Medicaid system which does not cover adult dental care services. Dental care is needed by low-income seniors to maintain nutritional and overall health status, thereby enabling them to have more independence and better self-care. The program has traditionally provided necessary dental appliances (full and partial dentures) and services to individuals sixty years of age or older whose income and resources are insufficient to meet the costs of treatment. As more and more seniors are maintaining their natural teeth, many only require the "related" services that include diagnostic, preventive and restorative care. The state provides reimbursement as a grants program for procedures and a co-payment that is no more than 20% of the procedure fee may be collected from the senior. This program is funded through general funds, but was not funded for the past two years. Previously, the annual budget for the program has been approximately \$550,000. In 2012, the program received a significant increase in funding, with approximately \$3 million allotted. Reinstatement of the Old Age Pension Dental Assistance Program required reinstatement of the Dental Advisory Committee, a governor-appointed 10-member committee that votes on grantees and determines allowable procedures and reimbursement schedules. Grantees can be direct dental providers or agencies/organizations with the ability to administer the funds. Participating dentists see the seniors in their own dental practices or in local nursing homes. The program has provided oral health services to more than 800 clients per year and the average cost per client the last year of funding was \$720. The Colorado Old Age Pension Dental Program has been well received in the communities and they are excited the program has been refunded as access to routine and preventive dental care is critical to maintain both oral and general health and quality of life.

### Lessons Learned:

---

### Contact Person(s) for Inquiries:

Corinne Allen-Ziser, RDH, BS, Adult & Community Coordinator, Oral Health Unit, Prevention Services Division, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, 4300 Cherry Creek Drive South, Denver, CO 80246, Phone: 303-692-6352, Fax: 303-758-3448, Email: [corinne.allen-ziser@state.co.us](mailto:corinne.allen-ziser@state.co.us)