



Dental Public Health Activity Descriptive Summary

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Lake County Health Department School Sealant Program

The Lake County School Sealant Program provides preventive dental care to second grade students in the Lake County School District. Toothy 2, a Mobile Unit that has been converted into a two- chair mobile dental office, travels between schools during each school year. Each second grade student in the selected elementary schools has the opportunity to receive an examination, prophylaxis, fluoride varnish treatment, and dental sealants on his/her permanent first molars. The cost of the program is free for the parents of the children that participate. The program is sustained by Medicaid reimbursement and grant funding.

The Mobile Unit staff comprises a dentist, a Mobile Unit driver, and an expanded functions dental assistant. The dentist and the dental assistant provide treatment for the students and the Mobile Unit driver drives and parks Toothy 2 in a predetermined location on school grounds for the duration of the program at each school. The program provides needed preventive dental care to children who may not have had access to a dentist or have never seen a dentist prior to the Mobile Unit arriving at the school. Last school year, 59% of the children seen had one or more untreated carious lesions. Also, 29% of parents reported that their child had never seen a dentist.

Toothy 2 brings much needed preventive dental care to the students while at school. The parents do not have to take time off from work and do not have to be present for their child to be seen. Also, the child misses limited time from school. Last school year, 958 second graders were treated and 2,855 sealants were placed. Since program inception in 2008, 2,623 students have been treated in 16 schools across Lake County. The program was awarded a Prudential Davis Productivity award on June 13, 2012, and was awarded a NACCHO Model Practice Award on July 12, 2012.

Lessons Learned:

One of the positive lessons learned has been that the program provides a valuable and much needed service to the community. There have been numerous positive comments made by school nurses, staff, parents, and community members in strong support of the program. Also, the percentages of dental sealants retained according to rechecks of third graders from the previous school year were 56% fully retained, 37% partially retained, and 7% lost.

One of the negative lessons learned is that we have not achieved near or at 100% participation at any school. The average participation for last school year was 55%. We have implemented promotion programs within each school and have developed a colorful, informative flyer to encourage participation. It is difficult to understand why parents would not want their child to participate in a free program that helps to improve their child's oral health.

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