

# Dental Public Health Activity Descriptive Summary

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## Community-based Oral Health Needs Assessment and Planning

Community resources are best used when targeted to the most at-risk populations. The Oral Health Needs Assessment and Planning Program (OHNAP) assists communities in Illinois to determine constituents oral health status and plan comprehensive oral health programs specifically to meet community needs. The Division of Oral Health (DOH) provides training and technical assistance to communities participating in this program. The Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors (ASTDD) "Seven-Step Model" and the *Illinois Supplemental Guidance* are used to facilitate a systematic data collection and analysis process that translates into an action plan. The step-by-step process in this model engages the community to provide integrated information about oral health status, the existing health system, as well as available resources. The process is completed with development of appropriate community intervention strategies and implementation of the action plan. Since the program's inception, 85 percent of Illinois' 102 counties have been assessed through the OHNAP Program. Each community is awarded a \$1,000 grant for the process. The OHNAP program addresses the oral health status of the entire population of participating communities. The resulting strategic interventions target high-risk populations determined by the community and ultimately benefit every resident. Outcomes of the OHNAP Program include:

- (1) Participating communities have garnered support and strengthened or initiated oral health programs. The number of dental sealant grant programs, public health dental clinics and referral programs for oral health care has increased.
- (2) The Division of Oral Health developed its 1998 Statewide Oral Health Conference agenda to address oral health issues depicted in the community plans. The conference provided a forum for the attending community leaders to meet. They, in turn, created a statewide oral health coalition, entitled IFLOSS.
- (3) The Illinois Medicaid agency responded to community needs by offering funding for efforts to develop public health dental clinics as a result of the OHNAP process.
- (4) The OHNAP program has engaged and empowered Illinois communities, many now with ongoing community coalitions addressing oral health needs.
- (5) The community plans provide DOH with a sound foundation for planning and resource leverage. This responsiveness to local needs by state partners has proven invaluable as the DOH supports efforts to improve oral health in Illinois.

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