



Dental Public Health Activities Descriptive Summaries

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Iowa Access to Baby and Child Dentistry (ABCD) Programs

The Iowa Access to Baby and Child Dentistry (ABCD) Program is an infrastructure-building, community-based project designed to improve access to dental services for low-income children ages 0 to 21. With \$50,000 of annual support from the Iowa Department of Human Services, the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) awards ABCD funds to Title V child health agencies. Between FY 2000-2002, four pilot programs, two urban and two rural, were initiated using the Washington State ABCD Program as a model. Each of the four pilot sites received \$25,000 per year for 2-year project periods to implement state-specific objectives. Based on community needs assessments, agencies develop individualized ABCD action plans using the following program objectives: 1) Mobilize community partners; 2) Implement comprehensive, community-based outreach; 3) Develop a care coordination system; 4) Provide community-based oral health education; and 5) Provide dental screenings and fluoride varnish applications. The ABCD Program places emphasis on children ages birth to 5 years, children from low-income families, and children enrolled in Medicaid or without dental insurance. All four ABCD pilot sites have shown a consistent improvement each year in the number of children receiving dental services through Medicaid. Increases in these Medicaid rates range from 11 percent to as much as 20 percent for the agency averages, significantly higher than the overall state increase of 7 percent for that same time period. Due to the success of the pilot programs, the ABCD Program was offered statewide in FY 2003, and 20 Title V agencies implemented ABCD projects. In FY 2006, the ABCD Program will serve all of Iowa's 99 counties. Funding is allocated according to the proportion of Medicaid-enrolled children per county in each agency's service area.

In FY 2004, the ABCD-Enhanced (ABCD-E) Program was initiated with funds from a HRSA State Oral Health Collaborative Systems (SOHCS) grant. Four Title V agencies were awarded \$7,500 each to further strengthen their local oral health infrastructure. The HRSA funds also were used to develop the *Iowa Access to Baby and Child Dentistry Best Practice Manual 2005: Strategies to Improve Oral Health*. The manual highlights the activities and successes of the ABCD and ABCD-E projects.

The ABCD Program's achievements include: (1) building oral health coalitions resulting in new community partnerships between public health, private providers, child care, WIC, Head Start, and schools, (2) increasing interest in local oral health issues through information presented to boards of health, Empowerment boards, and other service agencies, (3) having more dental hygienists are active in public health, providing screenings and fluoride varnish applications to low-income children and offering expertise to assist with dental referrals and patient follow-up, and (4) having more dentists are aware of the needs of children in their communities and are working with local Title V agencies to assure care for children.

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