



Dental Public Health Activity Descriptive Summary

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Massachusetts Special Legislative Commission on Oral Health

In November 1998, the Governor and the Massachusetts Legislature appointed a Special Legislative Commission on Oral Health. Commission members included representatives from a variety of health and non-health professional organizations, state legislators, government agencies, community advocates, as well as public and private dental provider networks. The Commission was charged to make recommendations related to the oral health status among state residents, community prevention programs, and access to oral health care services. The Commission submitted a Report to the Governor and the Legislature, which provided recommendations that included: (a) improve access to dental care for public and private dental insured individuals, (b) improve access to oral health screening and treatment services, (c) increase public and private capacity to provide dental services, (d) promote statewide individual and population based preventive services and programs, implement data collection and information system, and (e) establish a Special Advisory Committee on Oral Health. Most of the administrative costs were assumed by the MA Department of Public Health. The Delta Dental Plan of Massachusetts donated the resources for the printing of the Report of the Special Legislative Commission on Oral Health. Commission members participated as representatives for their respective organizations and agencies. One year after the recommendations were made, outcomes included:

- A total of \$19.2 million approved by legislature to increase the MassHealth reimbursement rates;
- A total of \$3.1 million approved to expand safety net provider sites;
- Eight (8) new dental sealant programs were established;
- Required Oral Health Component in 109 Enhanced School Health Programs statewide;
- Oral health coalitions established for the three largest cities in the state;
- One community received \$969,000 to implement an oral health initiative;
- An oral health summit was conducted in May 2001 to bring partners together to address issues;
- Participation in National Governors' Association Oral Health Policy Academy.

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