



Dental Public Health Activities Descriptive Summaries

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Michigan's Statewide Oral Health Coalition Development

The Michigan Oral Health Coalition has nearly 160 members representing a diverse group of private and public individuals and entities within the state dedicated to addressing oral disease, treatment and prevention. The Coalition includes primary care clinicians, oral health clinicians, advocacy and provider organizations, state and local government officials and consumers. While the Michigan Primary Care Association provides administrative support to the Coalition, the Coalition's agenda and activities are decided by the participants. The Coalition's kick-off was held in December 2003 with more than 130 people attending. At this meeting, the mission of the Coalition was created: "To improve oral health in Michigan by focusing on prevention, health promotion, surveillance, access, and the link between oral health and total health." The Coalition has a Steering Committee that meets at least quarterly, workgroups that meet regularly and has entire Coalition membership meetings at least bi-annually. The four workgroups that comprise the Coalition include: (1) Data, (2) Prevention, Education and Awareness, (3) Funding, and (4) Workforce. The Chair, Co-Chair and Workgroup Chairs are all volunteers. At the present, the Michigan Department of Community Health funds the Coalition as part of a grant received by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to support capacity building, program planning, development, evaluation, and surveillance for current and emerging oral health disease conditions. Annually, \$56,000 is allocated to the Michigan Primary Care Association (MPCA) to fund staff and support the Coalition workgroups, meetings, and activities. The Coalition is currently seeking 501(c)(3) status for long-term sustainability. By-Laws have been drafted and will be ratified. Leadership roles for the Coalition have expanded. Furthermore, the Coalition has developed *A Plan of Action for Improving the Oral Health Status of Michigan Residents*. This plan is being adopted by Michigan as the State Oral Health Plan. The Coalition and its partners have been the backbone of the oral health infrastructure in Michigan. The Coalition has provided a web-site for Coalition information, prepared and distributed printed materials, convened town meetings to review and discuss the Plan of Action, served as a resource for oral health data, and provide assistance to engage stakeholders. The successes of the Coalition include increasing awareness of oral health within the state, having a growing and diverse membership that offers an extensive network of experts, advocating oral health to the legislature, assisting and mentoring fellow members, developing innovative strategies to build community oral health capacity and develop community programs, and using a state action plan to coordinate efforts to improve oral health. For example, the strength of the Coalition's advocacy helped established the Dental Treatment Fund to cover emergency and preventive services for residents of mental health facilities and expanded the Healthy Kids Dental Program into more counties (the program enrolls Medicaid children in a Delta Dental insurance plan to improve access to care). The Coalition is just beginning to utilize evaluation strategies to determine its ongoing impact and effectiveness. A recent evaluation of a Coalition meeting showed members reporting a high level of satisfaction with the direction of the Coalition.

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