



Dental Public Health Activities Descriptive Summaries

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Community Oral Health Collaboration

School-based/school-linked prevention programs are effective in reducing dental decay. Delivering dental sealants to children from low-income families in a school setting is a cost-effective strategy for reducing disparities. Uninsured, underinsured and Medicaid children often do not receive the needed restorative dental care identified through school-based/school-linked dental sealant programs. The Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) Oral Health Program, the Children's Tooth Fairy Foundation (CTFF), and the University of Detroit Mercy (UDM) School of Dentistry have established a community oral health collaboration to provide dental care for children identified with unmet dental needs in school-based/school-linked prevention programs. In four Michigan counties located in the Greater Detroit area, CTFF provides children with unmet dental needs with comprehensive dental care at no cost to the families. The MDCH Oral Health Program's *SMILE! Michigan* school-based/school-linked dental sealant program refers children who reside in these counties to the UDM School of Dentistry for dental care services. CTFF covers the cost for dental treatment (approximately \$10,000 per year). CTFF holds annual fundraising events to support this collaboration. The collaboration is making a difference in the quality of life for the children receiving dental care (e.g., reduce suffering from dental pain/infection and restore teeth for function and self-esteem). Each member of the collaboration (the MDCH, CTFF and UDM) contributes essential elements to make the program successful (funding, care coordination/referral, and dental services). Efforts are continuing to build infrastructure, expand a network of dental providers, and raise funding to increase the collaboration's capacity to assist more children in establishing a dental home and provide them with needed dental care.

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