



# Dental Public Health Activity Descriptive Summary

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**Practice Number:** 28001  
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## Statutory Mandate/Authority for State Dental Program

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services established a bureau of dental health (state oral health program) in the early 1960's. The statutory mandate/authority for the state oral health program was enacted in 1985. Missouri's statute that creates the state health agency has a paragraph stating that the Department of Health and Senior Services shall maintain several bureaus and among them is a bureau of dental health:

*"The department of health and senior services shall maintain a bureau of vital statistics, a bureau of laboratories, a bureau of communicable diseases, a bureau of food and drug inspection, a bureau of child hygiene, a bureau of public health nursing, a bureau of tuberculosis control, a bureau of cancer control, a bureau of dental health, and other bureaus as may be necessary from time to time. The director of the department shall formulate orders and findings for the proper conduct of the bureaus."*

No further description of a bureau of dental health is included in the statute.

### Lessons Learned:

During times of competing health priorities and budgetary constraint, the statutory mandate/authority for a bureau of dental health has prevented the state oral health program from being eliminated and has kept the service programs from being assigned into other organizational entities. The statute played a prominent role in sustaining the state oral health program on more than one occasion.

Missouri's statute does not mandate a state dental director's position. Therefore, Missouri has been without a state dental director for several years due to budget constraints.

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