



Dental Public Health Activities Descriptive Summaries

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Healthy Smile - Happy Child Program (Early Childhood Caries Prevention)

In 1999, the Nevada Legislature approved a one-time redirection of MCH Block Grant Funds to establish an Oral Health Initiative, which led to developing an Early Childhood Caries (ECC) prevention program. Representatives from the Economic Opportunity Board of Clark County (EOB) Head Start, WIC, University of Nevada School of Medicine, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, Amerident, and the Health Division's WIC and MCH programs met to reach an agreement on the scope and focus of the program. The goal was the prevention of ECC and the promotion of optimal oral health in pregnant women and children ages 0-2 who are served in the WIC and Head Start programs. The Nevada State Health Division, Bureau of Family Health Services, Oral Health Program subsequently designed an ECC prevention program titled "Healthy Smile - Happy Child". The program would promote oral health education through anticipatory guidance and the use of fluoride varnish as well as encourage caregivers to check their young children's teeth at least once a month for tooth decay. The program would also utilize the "train-the-trainer" concept and target training for medical, childcare, education and social services providers, who then will educate the caregivers to prevent tooth decay among their young children. A curriculum was developed based on research, information obtained in focus groups and from key informants, and a review of projects completed in other states. Approximately \$48,000 was spent on developing the curriculum materials (brochures, posters, audiovisual materials and promotional items), which does not include staff salaries to develop and implement the program. Healthy Smile - Happy Child was implemented in April 2000. A contracted dental hygienist serves as the master trainer. Training is provided in a one-hour class with a slide presentation and class participants are provided with an Anticipatory Guidance manual. There is no charge for the class and participants can receive continuing education credit. The program was initially conceived as a pilot program but due to high interest, the program expanded statewide shortly after its implementation. During a two-year period, 30 classes have been offered and 450 participants have been trained. Evaluation at 6-12 months after completing the training showed that respondents all still found the information from the training useful, 61% reported that they have taught the "lift the lip" technique to their clients to check for tooth decay, and 96% reported that the training had helped them become more alert to recognize ECC.

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