

Dental Public Health Activity Descriptive Summary

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Nevada Third Grade Oral Health Screening Survey

Oral health assessments for youth in Nevada began in 1992, which showed that 67% of children had experienced decay in permanent or primary teeth. In order to have more current assessment numbers to determine gaps related to access to care, the Oral Health Program at the Nevada State Health Division (NSHD) used the Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors (ASTDD) Basic Screening Survey (BSS) protocol for a statewide screening of third graders. The current BSS video was filmed in Nevada because it had the most experience in conducting the surveys at the time. By using the BSS protocol, the data collected could be compared to the data collected by other states using the same survey. In 2002, the NSHD began preparations for this screening survey. The NSHD Oral Health Program partnered with the Nevada Dental Association (NDA) to conduct the statewide oral health screening of third graders, called the "Healthy Smile - Happy Child Survey."

The Department of Education requested that the survey ask the county school superintendents for their support before proceeding and ask the school principals for their willingness to participate. The assessment expanded to cover more counties including Clark, Washoe, Carson, Churchill, Douglas, Elko, Humboldt, Lincoln, Lyon, Mineral and Nye. Of the three hundred and sixty-three schools selected (based on the number of students participating in the free and reduced lunch program and location), all agreed to participate in the oral health screening. A Health Division representative communicated with the primary school contact person and explained the oral health screening. Screening materials were sent approximately three weeks in advance of scheduled day. Nevada Dental Association (NDA) had the responsibility to recruit volunteer dentists and assign them to schools for the 2003 BSS. The University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV) School of Dental Medicine recruited first year dental students to record screening information. Thirty-three participating dentists attended training (viewed a training tape and received copies of the screening form, post-screening evaluation form, a summary of important points and the examiner protocol). The screeners for subsequent BSS (2006, 2009) were either members of the Oral Health Program team or dental hygiene students from the Dental Hygiene Program at Truckee Meadows Community College. Team staff provided additional training to the students regarding the survey and calibrated them to the evaluation criteria mentioned above. All three hundred and sixty-three schools completed the oral health screenings on the day and time assigned.

Lessons Learned:

Some school's data had to be eliminated due to having less than twenty students enrolled in their third grade classes therefore eliminating Esmeralda and Eureka counties. The remaining three hundred and eighteen schools submitted a total of 3,701 screening records received with usable data. This equated to data being collected for 11% of the possible 33,947 3rd grade students. Completed evaluation questionnaires were received from 100 school personnel (teachers, administrators and nurses) and showed that many were very satisfied with the screenings.

This practice primarily addresses Healthy People (HP) 2020 Objectives 1.2, 2.2, and 12.2: Reduce the proportion of children aged 6 to 9 years with dental caries experience in their primary and permanent teeth, reduce the proportion of children aged 6 to 9 years with untreated dental decay in their primary and permanent teeth and increase the proportion of children aged 6 to 9 years who have received dental sealants on one or more of their permanent first molar teeth. Data collected will be used to increase support for other HP 2020 objectives including reduce caries experience/untreated caries, increase sealants, increase utilization of the oral health system, and increase preventive dental services for low-income children. The Oral Health Program intends to repeat the survey of third

graders every three years. The [2008-2009 Healthy Smile - Happy Child Survey Report](#) is available online.

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