



Dental Public Health Activity Descriptive Summary

Practice Number: 32003
Submitted By: Oral Health Program, New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services
Submission Date: March 2002
Last Updated: August 2011

New Hampshire School-Based Preventive Dental Programs

New Hampshire has 18 school-based preventive dental programs serving over 32,218 students. These programs are implemented in approximately 163 schools, accounting for 51% of the 317 elementary schools in the state. Many school programs now incorporate visits to local Head Start and WIC programs to provide early oral health education and intervention to prevent dental disease later on.

Each program is administered independently by a sponsoring agency. Some programs serve only a few schools in a town while some serve multiple school districts. Each program hires a registered dental hygienist (RDH) working under public health supervision to deliver and/or coordinate dental screenings, prophylaxis, topical fluoride application, dental sealants, individual and classroom oral health education, classroom fluoride mouthrinses and the collection of data for the state's oral health surveillance system. In one case children receive temporary fillings in schools under the direct supervision of a dentist. When a program identifies children who need restorative dental treatment, the RDH refers the children to local dentists and serves as a case manager to assure that barriers to treatment are minimized so that children and their families can show up for appointments and comply with treatment recommendations.

Ten programs receive partial funding from the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, Oral Health Program and reimbursement by Medicaid for preventive services provided by the RDHs. The programs also receive funding through sponsorship from a variety of community sources including hospitals, community health centers, Kiwanis, Visiting Nurse Associations, Northeast Delta Dental Corporation, foundations, and other community organizations. Dentists provide treatment to referred children at no cost, at Medicaid rates, or at discounted rates negotiated with the sponsoring organization funding the program.

Lessons Learned:

The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, Oral Health Program provides technical support to schools that are seeking funding to establish a school-based preventive dental program and to set up the program.

Contact Person(s) for Inquiries:

Nancy Martin, RDH, MS, Oral Health Program, New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, 29 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH 03301, Phone: 603-271-4235, Fax: 603-271-4506, Email: nmartin@dhhs.state.nh.us