

# Dental Public Health Activity Descriptive Summary

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## **New York State Department of Health School-Based Health Center Dental (SBHC-D) Program**

The New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH), Bureau of Dental Health (BDH) is responsible for the review, approval and ongoing monitoring of school-based health center dental (SBHC-D) programs. The SBHC-D program is an approved dental health services delivery model located in a school/pre-school/Head Start/Early Head Start program or on school/pre-school/Head Start/Early Head Start program property that provides dental health services during school hours.

By law, health care facilities (e.g., hospitals, diagnostic and treatment centers, community health center, and county health department) interested in establishing a SBHC-D program in New York State are required to complete an application for the provision of dental health services and receive approval from the NYSDOH for the addition of these services to their respective Article 28 operating certificates. As part of the application process, an Article 28 facility is asked to: (1) determine the need for school-based dental programs; (2) identify schools and pre-school and Head Start/Early Head Start sites within the community with the greatest need for dental services; (3) develop appropriate interventions to meet the identified needs of the target population; (4) develop a work plan consisting of activities, timelines, budget, staffing pattern, and an evaluation component; (5) establish a memorandum of understanding with each school or site; (6) develop an operating manual consisting of policies and procedures for program implementation, monitoring and quality assurance, compliance with rules and regulations, and billing for services; and (7) develop evaluation and continuous quality improvement plans.

Currently, 58 health care facilities operate approved school-based health center dental programs in 936 schools across the State, with all providing, at a minimum, preventive dental health services and sealants. The NYSDOH Bureau of Dental Health, utilizing funds from the Maternal-Child Health Block Grant, provides direct financial support to 31 of 58 SBHC-D programs, with each grantee receiving approximately \$50,000 per year for the establishment and/or ongoing provision of preventive oral health services in schools located in high need areas. Additionally, under a new four-year grant from the Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA), the Bureau of Dental Health is working on a special initiative on integrating dental health services into existing school-based health centers in a rural, underserved county and is partnering with one of its funded SBHC-D programs.

### **Lessons Learned:**

Implementation of the pre-approval process for establishing SBHC-D programs affords the BDH the opportunity to direct services to highest need areas in the state and to ensure that planned services are appropriate and compliant with rules and regulations and that all programs have in place evaluation and continuous quality improvement plans. Standardization of the application process has also resulted in greater consistency in the operation of programs and provision of services.

While funded SBHC-D programs are required to submit quarterly data reports on their effort and activities along with vouchers for reimbursement of expenses, there are no incentives for the 27 unfunded programs to submit such reports. As a result, it is not possible to collect important data from all 936 schools on the number of children served, specific dental services provided, the oral health status of program participants, and disparities in oral health.

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