

# Dental Public Health Activity Descriptive Summary

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## South Dakota State Oral Health Plan

Since the formation of the Oral Health Coalition in 2002, many local community agencies, professional organizations, and state agencies have initiated activities intended to improve oral health and to increase access to oral health services. However, in the absence of a comprehensive oral health plan, these various activities lacked the coordinated vision of a long-term and comprehensive approach that will assure effective and lasting change. The development of the statewide collaborative South Dakota State Oral Health Plan is a joint project between the South Dakota Department of Health and a wide range of stakeholders including key oral health advocates from the state Oral Health Coalition Steering Committee.

The SD State Oral Health Plan (<http://doh.sd.gov/oralhealth/PDF/Oral%20HealthPlan09.pdf>), published in May 2009, is designed to promote oral health by increasing awareness of the importance of oral health and to prevent dental disease by increasing access to preventive interventions and early dental care. It reflects the Oral Health Coalition's and the South Dakota Department of Health's vision, goals, and activities to achieve those goals. Special emphasis is given to reducing the health disparities that affect low-income or the uninsured, those who are geographically isolated, members of racial and ethnic groups, and others who are vulnerable because of special health care needs.

The SD Department of Health hosted two facilitated meetings of the Oral Health State Planning Committee to initiate the development of a strategic oral health plan in November and December of 2008. The group of 30, comprised of a broad range of key stakeholders, was charged with developing a plan for improving oral health. The group drafted a vision statement, developed guiding principles as the foundation for the plan, and identified criteria to consider when developing goals and strategies.

The five goals of the State Plan organized and grouped strategies into key action areas:

1. Increase awareness of the importance of oral health in maintaining overall health across the lifespan.
2. Enhance oral healthcare coverage and access for all.
3. Assure adequate number and utilization of dental professionals in South Dakota.
4. Establish oral health as a statewide priority.
5. Improve oral health through increased utilization of evidence-based preventive interventions.

The South Dakota State Oral Health Plan is a roadmap for oral health programming intended to create a unified, organized vision for improved oral health outcomes across the state. Developed in collaboration with many key partners, this document reflects the priorities and ideas of those oral health advocates. The plan is divided into five goals, each with objectives, strategies, actions steps and timelines that will be implemented by responsible parties. All stakeholders can use this plan as a tool to enlist partners, attract funding sources, and promote action for improving the oral health of South Dakotans. The planning committee supports the Plan and its principles as a framework for achieving improvements in oral health in SD. The Plan is intended to be a living document, and will be adapted, revised, and updated to meet the future needs of South Dakotans.

This project was made possible by the grant T12HP10690 from HRSA's Maternal and Child Health Bureau. In-kind contribution by the Oral Health State Planning Committee is estimated at 14 hours of group meetings with other volunteered work time that totaled 600 hours from all members. Additional staffing support included a facilitator and a writer costing approximately \$9,000.

Observed benefits of the state oral health plan since its release in 2009 included:

- Legislation was passed for Collaborative Supervision Agreement for Registered Dental Hygienists to serve in Public Health facilities outside the typical dental clinic.

- Establishment of a Regional Dental Health Educator to spread the message of the importance of oral health.
- More training for medical providers on relationship of oral health to overall health and for perinatal oral health (including pre and post pregnancy appointments).
- Development of an oral cancer monograph.

**Lessons Learned:**

The development of the South Dakota State Oral Health Plan was the first opportunity for many of the participants to be involved in the development of a state plan. The conservative nature of the vision for the state plan is a reflection of their first experience.

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