



## Dental Public Health Activities Descriptive Summaries

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### Fluoride Mouthrinse Program

The Vermont Department of Health, Dental Health Services administers a Fluoride Mouthrinse Program targeting public schools in communities with drinking water below optimal fluoride level. The program was established in 1976. Presently in 2002, Vermont has 55.5% of the state population served by public water systems receiving fluoridated water. Vermont's Fluoride Mouthrinse Program aims to help prevent dental caries among children by providing weekly 0.2% fluoride mouthrinse for children in grades 1 through 8. The program is free to schools. Three Dental Educators (dental hygienists) from Dental Health Services manage the program, each devoting 25% of their time. The Dental Educators communicate with the schools, provide a fluoride ordering protocol to the schools, train new school nurses and school fluoride coordinators to conduct weekly rinses, and track participation. Every school year, Dental Health Services initiates contact with the school by mailing the program registration. This includes an in-service training schedule for new personnel and a written agreement to be signed by the principal. New school nurses or school fluoride coordinators in the program are required to attend a training workshop prior to administering the program. Next, the program forwards the schools a medical order (prescription for the fluoride mouthrinses) and practice protocol to administer the fluoride. Each school orders their fluoride through a pre-selected distributor who will directly deliver the unit dose fluoride to the schools. Schools also send permission forms home for parents to enroll their children in the Fluoride Mouthrinse Program. A mid-year mailing to the schools gather information on student participation, volunteers helping the program, and preferred fluoride mouthrinse flavoring for future orders. The end of the year mailing forwards a certificate of appreciation to the schools and information for the next school year. During the 2001-02 school year, 173 of 193 eligible schools, with 17,829 children, participated in the Fluoride Mouthrinse Program. Fluoride supplies for the children cost approximately \$13,750 (about \$.77 per child).

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