



## Dental Public Health Activities Descriptive Summaries

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### Watch Your Mouth Campaign

As a result of the U.S. Surgeon General's report on oral health and call to action, Washington state responded by developing the Watch Your Mouth campaign to organize business and civic leaders, health and education professionals, parents and child advocates to make children's oral health a public policy priority. The campaign was launched in January 2001 with the goal of creating a public climate in which policy proposals to improve children's oral health are more likely to be understood and supported by the public and policymakers. Watch Your Mouth is a unique partnership among communications experts, policy experts and an activist foundation, combining national and local efforts. The communications are research-based and include posters, brochures, opinion editorials and advertising. A focused policy campaign is advanced through earned and paid media, the education and use of key community leaders and the recruitment of credible spokespeople outside the normal circle of dental health professionals. The Watch Your Mouth campaign in Washington is run by Citizen's Watch for Kids' Oral Health ([www.KidsOralHealth.org](http://www.KidsOralHealth.org)). The campaign is funded by Washington Dental Service Foundation and the Annie E. Casey Foundation and administered by Human Services Policy Center at the University of Washington. The FrameWorks Institute ([www.frameworksinstitute.org/](http://www.frameworksinstitute.org/)) conducted the original research on which the campaign is based, developed the creative and communications materials and owns the copyright to the campaign. Budget for year two of the campaign totaled \$756,000 for costs related to strategy/project management, policy analysis, coalition support, local coordinators, communications, political actions, evaluation, etc. In comparison to the baseline data gathered before the start of the campaign, Washingtonians who reported hearing about the issue nearly doubled (from 17% to 31%) and the proportion saying it should be an "extremely high" or "high" priority issue rose 7 points (from 56% to 63%). The campaign resulted in significant increases in Washington residents' knowledge and support for policy solutions such as fluoridation, Medicaid dental care for low-income children, and dental screenings in schools. As a result of policy work in year two, Washington's Governor has agreed to direct three key state agencies to improve K-12 children's preparedness and performance through promoting better oral health. The campaign was initially piloted in Washington State and is now being implemented in parts of California.

[For information on the Watch Your Mouth campaign in Washington, please contact the Human Services Policy Center or Washington Dental Service Foundation. If interested in implementing the campaign in your state, contact the FrameWorks Institute.]

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