



## Dental Public Health Activities Descriptive Summaries

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**Practice Number:** 57002  
**Submitted By:** Dental Health Services, Community and Family Health Division, Wyoming Department of Health  
**Submission Date:** March 2002  
**Last Updated:** March 2002

### Dental Health Program for Pregnant Women

A five-year study out of the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill reports that the evaluation of more than 850 pregnant women concluded that periodontal diseases accounted for up to 18% of pre-term deliveries. Prenatal care for pregnant women should include restoring optimal oral health and oral hygiene. Another benefit for providing dental care for pregnant women is that restoring oral health to the mothers-to-be may reduce the risk of transmitting tooth-decay causing bacteria from mother to infant when the children's teeth are erupted. In Wyoming, the Medicaid program does not cover preventive and restorative dental treatment for adults. As a result of collaborative planning efforts by the MCH Service Coordination Group (a committee that includes the state physician, public health nurses, and representatives from the state's oral health program, MCH program, CHIP, WIC, Medicaid, family planning, mental health program, and substance abuse program), the Wyoming Department of Health's MCH Section and Dental Health Program will start a dental health program for pregnant women in 2002. The first year of the program will receive funds from the MCH section. The dental program will be integrated with the MCH Best Beginnings Program and their pregnant clients will be referred for dental care. The program will deliver dental treatment for pregnant women 20 years or younger with Medicaid and pregnant women over the age of 20 with low income. Program services will include examinations, radiographs, preventive and non-surgical periodontal services (e.g., cleaning and scaling/root planing), restorations, extractions, and palliative emergency treatment (e.g., incision and drainage). Root canal treatment and crowns will require pre-authorization. The Dental Health Program will recruit private practicing dentists as program providers and distribute educational materials to the program clients. It is estimated that more than 1,600 pregnant women statewide will qualify for the dental program.

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