

Dental Public Health Activity Descriptive Summary

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SEALs (School-Based Dental Program)

The SEALs program in Massachusetts has been in service since 2007. We currently employ three full-time dental hygienists who provide dental services in several districts throughout the state. Our primary focus is on communities with underserved and at risk populations and communities that are not currently fluoridating their water systems. Our team, through the Office of Oral Health, works to promote better oral health in the Commonwealth especially among children. We currently serve children in the towns of Quincy, Brockton, Pembroke, Springfield, Worcester, Holyoke, Blackstone, Millville, Northampton, Foxboro and Williamsburg. We continue to add new schools monthly and will be adding additional hygienists to help in the areas we currently serve. We are always looking for ways to improve our services and promote better oral health in the state. We continue to develop and foster relationships with our community stakeholders, work to improve oral health and promote community water fluoridation throughout the Commonwealth.

Lessons Learned:

The SEALs program has learned many lessons over the years while implementing our program in different school districts. We have learned that having a community level connection is vital to a program's success. We have also learned through experience that we need to work not only with the school nurses, principal and staff but also administration within the district to ensure they are aware of the program and its benefits to their students. Having great relationships that are open, transparent and being available has led to great success for the SEALs dental program in Massachusetts. Working together as a team between the main office in Boston and the team of hygienists in the field we have establish wonderful working relationships with many communities throughout the state.

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Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child Model

Component	Description of Activity(s) & Process	Not Part of Our Program
Health Education – Integrate oral health into the health education curriculum or other subjects, (i.e. biology, nutrition, food service, phys. ed.).		X
Physical Education & Activity – Enforce the use of head/ facial protection to prevent injury during sports or related activities.		X
Nutrition Environment & Services – school nutrition policies promote optimal dental health.		X
Health Services – Promote a medical/dental integration that includes dental sealants and fluoride.	Our program works with the school nurses as well as the principals and administrative staff and encourages each school to promote the importance of oral health to the students and their families. Through our program we are providing education and services to some of the most at risk populations in Massachusetts. Our hygienists work to educate the children being seen about proper oral hygiene, diet and other factors that negatively affect oral health. We work to educate school nurses by attending local nurse meetings and presenting information on fluoride and sealants. We have had great success in these meetings and have received a very positive response including being asked to attend school health fairs.	
Counseling, Psychological & Social Services – Educate/emphasize the impact that poor oral health has on the ability to learn and on self-esteem.	The SEALS program has works to promote oral health within the schools by meeting with school nurses as well as principals to explain the importance of good oral health. Part of our program package when meeting with schools involves providing studies from the CDC on the impact oral health has on a child’s ability to learn. We have also provided these studies and additional oral health information to schools to distribute to parents during open houses and other meetings. The Office of Oral Health is available to answer any questions the parents or school system may have and our hygienists will meet with any parent who may have a question or concern.	
Social & Emotional Climate – Establish an environment where oral health prevention practices and programs are supported and valued.	Office of Oral Health staff and our program hygienists work with the schools participating in our program to create an open, friendly, educating environment when performing services at the location. Our hygienists work to make the children feel comfortable and take the time to educate as well as befriend them while working in the school. We are always willing to work with school staff as well as parents to make sure it is a positive and beneficial experience for all involved.	
Physical Environment –	Through the Office of Oral Health we promote community water	

<p>Assure the students and staffs have fluoridated water available throughout the day.</p>	<p>fluoridation. In districts that are not fluoridate we encourage the schools and nurses to get involved in local groups as well as with the local Board of Health to encourage the use of fluoridation in the water system. In communities that do not have the ability to fluoridate their water systems, we encourage participation in our school based dental programs as well as the fluoride mouthrinse program. The school based fluoride mouthrinse program is also implemented through our office and we provide all materials and supplies to schools free of charge.</p>	
<p>Employee Wellness – Support tobacco cessation programs for students & staff using tobacco/e-cigarettes.</p>		<p>X</p>
<p>Family Engagement – Promote school and family support for oral health screenings and regular dental visits.</p>	<p>Our program provides a detailed parent report to each child seen to discuss services provided and concerns that were observed by our hygienists. We also work through the Working in conjunction, the hygienists and the Office of Oral Health staff, ensure that each children receive proper treatment or follow-up care. We strive to have every child connected to a dental home. The program provides a list of dentist in each community and we work closely with school nurses when a child have urgent dental needs to ensure a timely follow up visit with a dentist. We are also available anytime to answer questions that the school or parents may have concerning the program, services provide, materials used as well as contacts to obtain insurance if needed.</p>	
<p>Community Involvement – Establish partnerships with local dental professionals to assure access to dental care & preventive interventions.</p>	<p>The SEALs program works with several stakeholders or partnerships in many of the communities that our program provides services in. In the town of Worcester we are involved in a dental coalition with several other providers and work to divide the schools amongst these groups and provide dental services in the Worcester School System. We have established a great relationship with the Nurse Leader in Springfield and are continuing to add schools in the Springfield School District in Brockton we have established a great relationship with the district and continue to add schools on a monthly basis. We've even become part of local school videos and have received the praises of the Superintendent of the district. In Holyoke we work closely with the Holyoke Health Center and continue to grow this partnership through our program and other work within the Office of Oral Health.</p>	