

# Virginia Oral Health Plan

## **Goal 1 | Public Awareness:** *Virginians know that good oral health is essential to overall health.*

Objectives	Strategies
Educate policy makers about the relationship between oral health and overall health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use electronic tools (e.g., Internet, webinars, Website, Smart Boards) to deliver educational messages.</li><li>• Enhance the oral health knowledge base of educators and school administrators to enable them to more accurately provide information. Increase the number of oral health related Standards of Learning (SOL). ('15 in K,1,5,9)</li><li>• Educate legislators about importance of oral health and importance of dental benefits to achieve optimal health.</li><li>• Identify and partner with other coalitions (i.e. Diabetes, Tobacco, Individuals with Special Needs) that have oral health as an area of emphasis to maximize impact.</li><li>• Recruit constituents, patients/patient representatives and multidisciplinary providers to share stories.</li><li>• Invite policy makers to safety net clinics and/or Mission of Mercy projects.</li></ul>

Objectives	Strategies
<p><b>Create targeted communication campaigns to encourage healthy behavior change related to oral health for all.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote oral health literacy (knowledge, understanding, and communication) in the community.</li> <li>• Develop an educational component for use at safety net settings such as Mission of Mercy projects.</li> <li>• Incorporate oral health into care coordination to increase health literacy.</li> <li>• Increase “lay health promoters” (community health workers) trained with oral health messages.</li> <li>• Provide written or electronic educational materials to healthcare professionals, educators and decision makers.</li> <li>• Create an integrated electronic oral health educational platform (ATT, Amazon, Google, Microsoft, Apple) for healthcare professionals, educators and decision makers.</li> <li>• Utilize school systems to distribute literature and educate parents and teachers about the importance of oral health.</li> <li>• Utilize media sources to raise awareness of the importance of oral health and the need for increased funding to provide access to oral health services.</li> <li>• Improve cultural perception of oral health.</li> </ul>

Objectives	Strategies
<p><b>Identify oral health data gaps and develop appropriate surveillance indicators to effectively communicate the status of oral health in the Commonwealth.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain current data on oral health services provided by safety net programs.</li> <li>• Conduct periodic calibrated oral health assessments on third grade school age children.</li> <li>• Monitor state oral/pharyngeal cancer data.</li> <li>• Monitor the percentage of Virginians receiving fluoridated community water.</li> <li>• Monitor access to oral health care services before, during and after pregnancy for women who have recently had a baby.</li> <li>• Monitor adult access to oral health services.</li> <li>• Measure the proportion of low-income children and adults who use the oral health care system each year, including the number of visits where children under three receive oral health services.</li> <li>• Monitor the number of licensed dentists participating in Smiles for Children”.</li> <li>• Determine state and federal manpower needs.</li> </ul>

**Goal 2 | Prevention/Early Diagnosis and Treatment: *The prevalence of dental disease is reduced in Virginia through prevention activities and early diagnosis and treatment.***

Objectives	Strategies
<b>Support community water fluoridation as an evidence-based safe and effective means to prevent dental decay in adults and children.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide state and local decision makers and the public with high quality scientific information on fluoride and fluoridation on a proactive and ongoing basis.</li> <li>• Provide information to professionals and citizens regarding fluoridation and the change in Virginia’s drinking water to 0.7ppm.</li> <li>• Develop collaborative efforts to provide support to communities to educate and address issues related to fluoride/fluoridation; ensure rapid response in place.</li> <li>• Continue to provide some level of training to professionals to be able to address/speak about fluoride.</li> </ul>
Objectives	Strategies
<b>Conduct evidence based school-based preventive dental sealant programs for children at high risk for dental disease.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide sealants in school-based projects that utilize ADA/CDC evidence based guidelines for all at risk children in elementary school.</li> <li>• Include other evidence based preventive services in conjunction with school-based sealant services.</li> <li>• Use public/private partnerships to develop multiple models for sealant programs in a variety of settings.</li> <li>• Provide educational services in conjunction with direct services for children.</li> <li>• Collaborate with school nurses and local dentists to assist families in securing a dental care home for children who are identified in prevention programs.</li> <li>• Work with local educational authorities, School Health Advisory Boards (SHAB), and Parent Teacher Organizations (PTOs) on issues of importance of oral health.</li> <li>• Education (to local super intendents) around school based programs.</li> </ul>

Objectives	Strategies
<p><b>Continue to support programs and legislation created to ensure that all Virginia children have access to a dental home by age one.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate general dentists to comfortably treat the preschool age child, and establish dental home with a general dentist by age one.</li> <li>• Mandate dental screenings for school children prior to enrollment <i>(form augmented slightly, committee forming for legislation)</i>.</li> </ul>
Objectives	Strategies
<p><b>Identify and assess promising community-based oral disease prevention activities and consider adopting, adapting, or piloting promising programs that are well-suited to Virginia.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase support for programs that provide evidence based and/or population based on-site dental services (dental visits to schools, Head Start, etc.).</li> <li>• Expand current dental home training to include patients with special needs and adults.</li> <li>• Explore the use of tele-dentistry in underserved areas throughout the Commonwealth. Analyze, and advocate for use if appropriate, reimbursement models used by other states for tele-dentistry. <i>(teledentistry forum – board of dentistry)</i></li> </ul>

**Goal 3 | Medical and Dental Collaboration: *Medical and Dental providers and educators understand the links between oral health and overall health and work together to ensure Virginians receive comprehensive care.***

Objectives	Strategies
<p><b>Provide education to physicians and dental professionals about the links between oral health and systemic disease.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a Virginia specific toolkit for best practices related to integrating oral health into the medical practice setting.</li> <li>• Create program that includes an online oral health training template for physicians that meets Maintenance of Certification (MOC) criteria. <i>(AAP EQUIPP program)</i>.</li> <li>• Provide and maintain a resource for consistent and up-to-date information on oral health educational opportunities for providers.</li> <li>• Expand educational opportunities for medicine, nursing, pharmacy and physician assistant training to include oral health.</li> <li>• Promote the Smiles for Life oral health curriculum through their websites, association literature and as part of their regular meetings and conferences.</li> <li>• Partner with professional associations (state societies and local chapters) to provide interprofessional networking and educational opportunities that focus on interdisciplinary approaches to oral health care.</li> </ul>

Objectives	Strategies
<p><b>Increase the number of children who see a dentist by age one.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide training and support for medical professionals providing oral preventive services through the Bright Smiles for Babies (BSB) Fluoride Varnish Program in an effort to address early childhood cavities and encourage referrals.</li> <li>• Partner with OBGYN professionals to education pregnant women of importance of oral health.</li> <li>• Provide training and support to encourage dentists to provide care for young children.</li> </ul>
Objectives	Strategies
<p><b>Increase the amount of oral health education provided to students at Virginia's schools of medicine, nursing, pharmacy, and physician assistant training.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement Smiles for Life (oral health curriculum) in at least one school of medicine, nursing, pharmacy and physician assistant training (<i>implemented in at least 9, but not saturated</i>).</li> <li>• Create and convene an oral health education work group of state champions to share ideas and best practices and act as a resource to health institutions.</li> <li>• Partner with at least one school from each discipline (medicine, nursing, pharmacy and physician assistant training) to plan annual interprofessional educational opportunities that include dental professionals.</li> </ul>

**Goal 4 | Insurance and Reimbursement: *Virginians have access to quality, affordable, and comprehensive dental coverage.***

Objectives	Strategies
<p><b>Increase comprehensive dental services for all Virginians eligible for Medicaid.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to serve on the Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) Dental Advisory Committee.</li> <li>• Issue a report on the status of oral health in Virginia.</li> <li>• Increase number of dentists participating in Medicaid.</li> <li>• Maintain or improve all major aspects of existing Medicaid dental benefits (e.g., fees, patient eligibility and scope of services).</li> <li>• Work to ensure that reimbursement for dental services through Medicaid are at least at the 65<sup>th</sup> percentile of the ADA rate survey. (<i>Virginia is currently 47.4%</i>)</li> <li>• Monitor dental services indicators of access and availability for all insurers and request corrective actions as indicated.</li> <li>• Advocate for the inclusion of dental services as an ‘essential benefit’ for all Virginians, not just children.</li> <li>• Research barriers and develop strategies to increase provider participation in Medicaid dental program.</li> </ul>
Objectives	Strategies
<p><b>Ensure dental benefits in the exchange are affordable, understandable and accessible</b>  <b>Ensure dental benefits in the exchange are affordable, understandable and accessible.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate navigators about pediatric and adult dental benefits within the exchange.</li> <li>• Advocate for the inclusion of dental services as an ‘essential benefit’ for all Virginians, not just children enrolled in the exchange.</li> <li>• Work with bureau of insurance to advocate for appropriate transparency of pricing and services offered for dental benefits on the exchange.</li> </ul>



Objectives	Strategies
<b>Explore other coverage and reimbursement models for Virginians not eligible for Medicaid or the exchange.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore what other states are doing to provide coverage.</li> <li>• Broaden partners and invigorate.</li> </ul>
Objectives	Strategies
<b>Advocate for a comprehensive dental benefit for all adults in Medicaid or state supported expansion plan.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broaden an invigorated stakeholder list.</li> <li>• Explore and advocate for appropriate, incremental expansion of benefits (i.e. special needs patients).</li> </ul>

**Goal 5 | Workforce: *The oral health workforce in Virginia adequately meets the needs of its citizens by working to the full extent of their education and training.***

Objectives	Strategies
Through ongoing legislation and education, ensure dental hygienists and other dental professionals are able to practice to the full extent of their education and training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand remote supervision hygiene program beyond VDH to include licensed hygienists in safety net clinics.</li> <li>• Monitor safety, value, access in remote supervision hygiene programs.</li> <li>• Do an environmental scan (local, regional, national, international) of best practice models.</li> <li>• Study the effective use of different models and identify potential approaches that can be adopted, adapted, or piloted to increase the capacity of the system to provide dental services for the most vulnerable-populations.</li> <li>• Development communication plan for stakeholders and improve report dissemination to stakeholders and prepare fact sheets for legislators and decision makers.</li> </ul>
Objectives	Strategies
In partnership with Virginia Commonwealth University School of Dentistry and other dental educators throughout Virginia, ensure students are exposed to a wide variety of dental environments, patients, and procedures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase experience included in pre-service coursework for specialty clinics, community settings, and state or non-profit facilities.</li> <li>• Ensure that dental/dental hygiene students get experience in treating seniors and nursing home residents.</li> <li>• Partner with dental and dental hygiene schools to provide preventative services for preschool children enrolled in Head Start and Early Head Start programs.</li> <li>• Encourage local dental and dental hygiene components (chapters) and study groups (journal clubs) to host students.</li> <li>• Provide continuing education on best practice for student instruction along with education focused on issues with serving special populations including individuals with special needs.</li> </ul>

Objectives	Strategies
<b>Provide incentives to practice in targeted areas (ex. malpractice insurance discount, low cost loans, loan repayment to dental providers); especially in rural and underserved areas.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide scholarships or loan forgiveness for dentists and dental hygienists working in underserved areas.</li> <li>• Provide incentives for practicing in underserved areas/with underserved populations (i.e. increased reimbursement rates from insurance companies, low interest loans).</li> </ul>