

**The Washington Dental Service (WDS) Foundation is a non-profit funded by Washington Dental Service** – the leading dental benefits company in Washington State. The Foundation’s mission is to eliminate oral disease to improve overall health for all. The Foundation focuses their work specifically on young children and seniors and works closely with partner organizations to develop and implement innovative programs. The Foundation also advocates for policies that produce permanent changes in the healthcare arena.

- *Dental decay is the single most common chronic disease of early childhood—five times more common than asthma.*
- *Oral disease among young children in Washington is increasing and disease rates in Washington are significantly higher than rates nationally:*
  - *45% of low-income preschoolers had tooth decay in 2005 as compared with 38% in 1994*
  - *59% of elementary school-age children had dental caries in 2005 as compared with 46% in 1994.*
  - *Nationally, 28% of pre-school children and 52% of elementary school-age children have tooth decay.*
- *Nearly one in five older adults has untreated dental cavities nationally.*
- *Those living in communities with water fluoridation experience up to 40% fewer cavities, yet in Washington only about 50% of the population lives in communities with fluoridated water.*

Tooth decay, gum disease, infection and pain can cause eating, learning and speech problems for children and adults. Oral health is a critical aspect of overall health. Improving oral health will save money for everyone, help seniors live healthier, and enable children to do better in school increasing their chances for success. Here is a list of our initiatives:



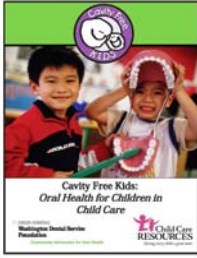
**Early Intervention in Dental Settings—Access to Baby and Child Dentistry (ABCD) programs** expand access to dental care for young children in Washington state by providing dental services — both preventive and restorative — to Medicaid-enrolled children up to age 6. More than 63% of young Medicaid-enrolled children don’t receive dental care. To change this, local dental societies, public health agencies, state Medicaid, the University of Washington School of Dentistry and WDS

Foundation have joined together to implement ABCD programs. These efforts are having an impact in 29 of Washington’s 39 counties. In counties with ABCD, the utilization of dental services increased from 21% to 38% from 1997 to 2008.

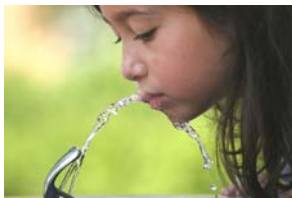


**Early Intervention in Medical Settings**—The Foundation is working to change the standard of well-child care so that dental disease prevention services are delivered at an early age—in the doctor’s office. Children are seen by their physician at least 8 times by their third birthday. The Foundation is partnering with the medical system and delivering in-office workshops which address oral screenings, risk assessment, sharing oral health tips with

parents, applying fluoride varnish to prevent or reverse early decay, and referring high risk children for dental care.



**Early Intervention in Child Care Settings**— To promote oral health in pre-school Head Start programs, the Foundation developed a curriculum called **Cavity Free Kids** to help teachers, parents and children learn about tooth decay and what they can do to prevent it. Since 2000, more than 85% of Washington Head Start programs have been trained, and children across the state have been learning about oral health through fun, hands-on activities. The curriculum has been well-received in Head Start programs nationally with Head Start trainings held in 14 other states. More recently, the curriculum has been expanded for child care settings.



**Fluoridating Drinking Water**— Water fluoridation is the most important step a community can take to improve the oral health of all residents. WDS Foundation promotes legislation to encourage fluoridation and provides assistance to groups who are committed to bringing the benefits of fluoride to their communities. Since 2001, the Foundation's work in local communities has increased fluoridated water to more than 208,000 Washington residents.



**Expanding the Capacity of Community Health Centers**— The Foundation invests in community health centers to increase their capacity to provide preventive and restorative care to the underserved. From 2000-mid 2008, the Foundation invested more than \$2.7 million leading to 47,000 additional annual dental visits.

**The SmileMobile**, a 40-foot modern dental clinic on wheels has been serving children in need across Washington state since 1995. The SmileMobile was created to bring dental services — at little or no charge — directly to children who do not otherwise have access to care. Since it first hit the road, the mobile clinic has treated more than 25,000 children throughout the state.



**Broadening Support for Policies to Improve Oral Health—The Citizens' Watch campaign** works to enact effective policies, generate media attention and use advertising to put a spotlight on the problem and its solutions. Its coalition represents dental, medical, business, labor, education, public health and child and senior advocacy interests. The Foundation and coalition members are actively speaking out for fluoridation, getting oral health in well-child

checkups, and improving the oral health of seniors. These issues are resonating with policymakers who draw strength from the campaign to press for solutions.



**Addressing the Oral Health of Seniors**—The WDS Foundation is committed to helping improve the oral health of older residents and is working to engage health professionals, including pharmacists and home health aides to take preventive steps before problems affect overall health and become more difficult and expensive to treat. The Foundation is also working to improve access to dental care for older adults.