

DELTA DENTAL
**Washington Dental Service
Foundation**

Community Advocates for Oral Health

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DELTA DENTAL
**Washington Dental Service
Foundation**

Community Advocates for Oral Health

Our mission:
Washington Dental Service Foundation, funded by
Washington Dental Service, eliminates oral disease in
order to improve overall health for all.



SPRING 2011

Foundation

NEWS



2010 Smile Survey

The 2010 Smile Survey, the latest statewide assessment of children's oral health in Washington, is showing that children's oral health in Washington is improving— but further work remains.

Conducted every five years by the Washington State Department of Health, the Smile Survey evaluates the oral health of Head Start, kindergarten and elementary school children.

More children are now getting dental decay treated. Untreated decay among low-income preschoolers was cut in half over the last 5 years, from 26% in 2005 to 13% in 2010. Further good news is that untreated tooth decay among 3rd graders has also declined significantly.

"Much has been accomplished in the last five years," said Irene Hunter, DDS, Tenino dentist and former Washington Dental Service Foundation Trustee. "More kids are getting dental care because of successful public/private partnerships and collaborative efforts to improve children's oral health. This shared commitment must continue because it benefits the overall health of children—and saves money."

In recent years, Washington has stepped up efforts to improve children's oral health by increasing the number of children with dental coverage and their ability to access care. Since 2005, health coverage for all children has expanded through Apple Health for Kids, which includes dental care. About 45 percent of all children in Washington are now eligible for dental coverage

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Below is a list of those who have made gifts to the Washington Dental Service Fund since our last publication.

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Oral Health from Birth: Improving the oral health of pregnant women and their children

Washington Dental Service Foundation is working to change the standard of prenatal care so comprehensive oral health services are routinely delivered to pregnant women.

When mothers have tooth decay, their babies are at increased risk for tooth decay as well. Studies have shown that mothers typically pass cavity-causing bacteria to their infants and toddlers when they kiss them or share food. Women who take care of their mouths and get regular dental care during and after their pregnancies can improve their children's oral health as well as their own. Further, during pregnancy, women are highly receptive to health messages that impact the wellness of their infant.

Currently, many women don't seek dental care during pregnancy. Yet, new evidence-based guidelines recommend that all pregnant women get prevention services and needed treatment before their baby is born.

To learn more about ways to increase care for pregnant women, the Foundation conducted focus groups with dentists

across the state. Key takeaways: dentists were interested in learning more on the topic and that they wanted education materials to share with patients.

The Foundation teamed up with the UW School of Dentistry to develop a curriculum targeting practicing dental providers. Incorporating the latest science, the curriculum addresses pregnancy physiology and implications for oral health. It also outlines evidence-based clinical guidelines for delivering care and oral health tips for patients. The new evidence-based guidelines were released in early 2010 by the California Dental Association Foundation together with American College of Obstetrics and Gynecologists, District IX.

While there has been some concern in the dental community about liability for serving pregnant women, Melissa Moore, Sales and Marketing Manager at NORDIC, the provider of professional liability coverage in Washington, states that "studies repeatedly show dental treatments should not be delayed due to pregnancy. Delaying treatment may, in fact, be putting the mother and her unborn child at increased risk."

Interest in this topic has been growing across the nation and locally as well. Prenatal oral health was the topic of Whatcom County Oral Health Coalition's recent Medical-Dental Symposium—where the Foundation's new curriculum was piloted.

Next steps include rolling out the curriculum in other Washington communities, engaging prenatal medical providers in oral health as well as getting the message out to pregnant women that oral health is critical to their health and their infant's. ■



Extending Our Reach

In 2010, grants and loans totaling \$1,025,000 were awarded by the WDS Foundation to support the launch and expansion of community dental clinics across Washington State. This investment is projected to increase patient visits by 28,475 annually.

Columbia Valley Community Health Services (\$125,000) – fund replacement equipment in eight dental operatories and add four additional operatories to their Wenatchee clinic. This upgrade and expansion will increase access by nearly 3,200 patient visits annually.

Geriatric Dental Group (\$90,000) – open their third dental clinic - located in Vancouver. The new clinic will serve adults over 55 with 6,000 patient visits annually.

Family Health Centers (\$100,000) – fund a four-operator clinic in Oroville. The new clinic will deliver 3,500 patient visits each year.

Interfaith Community Health Center (\$65,000) – expand the Bellingham clinic to serve more pregnant women and young children with an additional 1,675 annual patient visits

Medical Teams International (\$82,000) – replace the North Puget Sound mobile dental van. This will allow them to expand services resulting in an additional 1,500 annual patient visits.

New Day Community Dental Clinic (\$250,000 grant, \$100,000 loan) – open a new clinic in Vancouver to serve low-income adults and seniors with 10,000 patient visits annually.

Spokane District Dental Society Foundation (\$192,000) – support the new volunteer-based IDEA clinic in conjunction with the Yakima Valley Farm Worker's Clinic. They estimate their volunteers will provide 2,600 patient visits annually by 2013.

Access to Baby and Child Dentistry (ABCD) Programs received \$121,000 in grants. Programs that received start-up funds included:

Adams County
Asotin County
Grant County
Kittitas County
Lincoln County

2010 Smile Survey - continued from page 1

through Apple Health for Kids. More children are receiving dental care: the percentage of Medicaid-enrolled children, ages birth to 6, receiving care increased from 34 percent in 2005 to 43 percent in 2009.

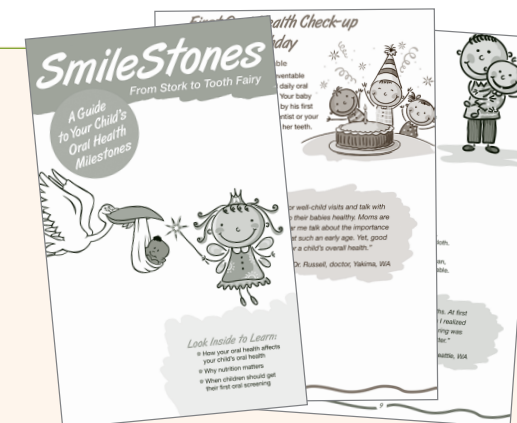
Thanks to the many dentists that participate in the Access to Baby and Child Dentistry (ABCD) program, currently, it operates in 34 of Washington's 39 counties. As a result, more young Medicaid-enrolled children are accessing early dental care. **ABCD was recently praised by the Pew Center on the States for "achieving impressive results" while "delivering a strong return on taxpayers' investment."**

"Preventing tooth decay is critical to children's health and it produces significant cost savings for families, business, and the state," said Russell Maier, MD and Board Chair of WDS Foundation.

The Smile Survey also revealed areas of concern. Disparities in children's oral health still persist as low-income and minority children suffer from the highest rates of tooth decay. Children just starting school have a high rate of tooth decay: nearly 40 percent of Kindergarten children.

While oral health is improving for some children, too many children still suffer from preventable tooth decay.

Visit www.ABCD-Dental.org to download an overview of the 2010 Smile Survey and learn more about the ABCD program. ■



Promote the Importance of Oral Health for Pregnant Women

The Foundation has bookmarks and new booklets—free of charge—with oral health tips for pregnant women and their young children. If your office or organization would like copies, please email jwittau@deltadentalwa.org or call (206) 729-5570 to order. The bookmarks are available in English, Spanish, Russian and Vietnamese. The SmileStones booklet is available in English. ■