

# ORAL HEALTH

## Highlights Across the Agency

### HOW DO WE IMPROVE ORAL HEALTH?

HRSA provides funding, technical assistance and subject matter expertise for multiple oral health programs, activities, and initiatives to increase access to quality oral health care in underserved communities across the country.

#### Bureau of Primary Health Care (BPHC)

HRSA announced **\$85 million in [Oral Health Infrastructure](#)** (OHI) one-time supplemental funding to support enhancements for new or existing high quality, integrated oral health services at health centers. In 2017, HRSA's Health Center Program provided more than 16.5 million dental visits, representing a 13 percent increase from 2016.

#### Bureau of Health Workforce (BHW)

- [Oral Health Workforce Development Programs](#) support states and training institutions to help build and train the oral health workforce that improves access to quality oral health care for those most in need.
- HRSA's National Health Service Corps (NHSC) program [offers loan repayment and scholarships to health care professionals, including dentists and dental hygienists](#) that practice in Health Professional Shortage Areas. In FY18, nearly 1,300 dentists and registered dental hygienists received loan repayment through the NHSC Loan Repayment Program and more than 120 NHSC dentist scholarships were awarded.
- In addition, nearly **\$3 million in [scholarships for disadvantaged students](#)** was dispersed to dental students in FY18.

#### Office of Planning, Analysis, and Evaluation (OPAE)

OPAE provides the [HRSA-wide oral health leadership](#) for cross-agency initiatives and departmental priorities. Working across the agency, HRSA [developed an essential set of \[oral health core clinical competencies\]\(#\)](#) for primary care clinicians in efforts to improve access for early detection and preventive interventions leading to improved health. OPAE also administers the [National Organizations for State and Local Officials \(NOSLO\)](#) cooperative agreement program which funds activities that address oral health.

#### Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB)

Oral health is [one of 15 Title V national performance priority areas](#) that states can track to demonstrate improvement in the percent of women who had a dental visit during pregnancy and the percent of children who had a preventive dental visit in the last year. In 2018, MCHB funded the [National Center for Oral Health Systems Integration and Improvement \(COHSII\)](#) to lead a consortium to improve existing systems of care in support of a quality improvement, patient-centered approach that addresses the comprehensive oral health needs of MCH populations.

#### Ryan White HIV/AIDS Bureau (HAB)

In FY18, HAB provided around **\$8.9 million for the [Part F Dental Reimbursement Program](#)** that defrays costs for educational institutions that provide oral health care to people living with HIV, and nearly **\$3.5 million for the [Community-Based Dental Partnership Program](#)** that provides hands-on learning opportunities for future oral health professionals.

#### Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP)

FORHP administers community-based and telehealth programs to increase access to care in rural communities to address their unique health care challenges. In FY18, FORHP invested **over \$3.5 million in [grant funding across community-based programs](#)**. Projects focused on various community health needs utilizing a network approach to provide innovative solutions to oral healthcare needs through the use of telehealth, school-based clinic, and mobile dental clinics to increase access and quality of oral health services. Through the Telehealth Network Grant Program (TNGP), HRSA awarded **\$1.8 million to two [telehealth networks](#)** that are focusing on oral health. The purpose of this 4-year grant program is to demonstrate how telehealth networks can improve access to health care services and support health care providers in rural and underserved communities.

### KEY FACTS

- Around **58 million people** live in designated dental health professional shortage areas.
- Over **1,700 National Health Service Corps dentists and registered dental hygienists** work in health professional shortage areas.
- HRSA Oral Health Training (OHT) programs trained **over 9,500 oral health students** and nearly **500 primary care dental residents** in academic year 2017-2018.
- **Seventy-five percent** of OHT program-supported predoctoral students and 64 percent of postdoctoral trainees received clinical training in medically underserved communities in academic year 2017-2018.
- HRSA has expanded the **NHSC Students to Service Loan Repayment Program** to include 80 dental students pursuing a DDS or DMD degree.
- HRSA co-sponsored the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Workshop - **Integrating Oral and General Health through Health Literacy Practices** in December 2018. Read the report [Proceedings of a Workshop](#).