

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)

In 2019, 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 2019, HRSA's Health Center Program served more than 6.7 million dental patients, representing a 29 percent increase from 2015.

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 FY20, over 900 dentists and registered dental hygienists received loan repayment through the NHSC Loan Repayment Program and 77 NHSC Scholarship Program awards were made to dental students committed to serving underserved communities.
- In addition, nearly **\$3.9 million in scholarships for disadvantaged students** was dispersed to dental students in FY20.

Office of Planning, Analysis, and Evaluation (OPAE)

OPAE provides HRSA-wide oral health leadership for cross-agency initiatives and departmental priorities. OPAE is working on the **development of an evidenced-based oral health education and awareness campaign** for HRSA target audiences including health center patients, people with HIV, children and families, and people who live in rural areas.

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.
- MCHB funds 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.
- [Bright Futures](#), led by the Academy of Pediatrics and supported by HRSA, provides evidence-based guidance for all preventive care screenings and well child visits including oral health care.

Ryan White HIV/AIDS Bureau (HAB)

In FY20, HAB provided around **\$9.1 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 **\$3.4 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 FY20, FORHP invested over **\$2.7 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 rural oral health workforce recruitment to increase access and quality of oral health services. Through the Telehealth Network Grant Program (TNGP), HRSA awarded close to **\$2.4 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

- Over **60 million people** live in designated dental health professional shortage areas.
- Nearly **2,000 National Health Service Corps dentists and registered dental hygienists** work in health professional shortage areas.
- HRSA Oral Health Training (OHT) programs trained **over 11,120 oral health students** and around **500 primary care dental residents** in academic year 2019-2020.
- **Fifty-five percent** of OHT program-supported predoctoral students and 54 percent of postdoctoral trainees received clinical training in medically underserved communities in academic year 2019-2020.
- In FY20, **NHSC Students to Service Loan Repayment Program** supported 58 new awards to 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**. Read the 2019 report [Proceedings of a Workshop](#).