

**“Promoting and Enhancing the Oral Health of the Public”**



# HHS ORAL HEALTH INITIATIVE 2010



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# HHS ORAL HEALTH INITIATIVE 2010

## Background

The first-ever Surgeon General's report on oral health, *Oral Health in America*, released in May 2000, called attention to a "silent epidemic" of dental and oral diseases that burdens millions of children and adults throughout the United States. In the report, the Surgeon General addressed the importance of building a science and evidence-base to improve oral health, building the infrastructure to address oral health, removing barriers to oral health services, and developing public-private partnerships to address disparities in oral health.

Oral health is essential to overall general health and well-being, but as Healthy People 2020 national oral health objectives are being finalized, there is growing recognition that many challenges identified 20 years ago have not been adequately addressed. Dental caries (tooth decay) is the single most common chronic childhood disease; there are striking disparities in oral diseases among various disadvantaged and underserved population subgroups; and approximately one-third of the U.S. population has no access to community water fluoridation.

## HHS Oral Health Initiative 2010

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) currently supports a broad spectrum of oral health activities that has had a significant and positive impact on the nation's oral health through oral health financing, research, workforce development, public health action, quality initiatives and technology. The USPHS Oral Health Coordinating Committee is compiling a summary of activities that captures the breadth and diversity of efforts within HHS to support oral health. In late 2009, HHS Assistant Secretary Howard Koh called for the implementation of an HHS-wide effort to improve the nation's oral health by realigning existing resources and creating new activities. This new effort seeks to improve coordination and integration among programs to maximize outputs. In addition, nine new initiatives, highlighted in this document, reflect Agency and Office commitment of new activities in support of an HHS **Oral Health Initiative 2010**.

The HHS Oral Health Initiative's key message is that ***"Oral Health is Integral to Overall Health."*** This initiative utilizes a systems-approach to create and finance programs to:

- emphasize oral health promotion/disease prevention
- increase access to care
- enhance oral health workforce
- eliminate oral health disparities

Under the leadership of the Assistant Secretary of Health and the Administrator of Health Resources and Services Administration with support from the Oral Health Coordinating Committee and the Office of Minority Health the initiative renews HHS's commitment to work with national and state partners and continues building upon the recommendations set forth in the Surgeon General's Report and the National Call to Action to Promote Oral Health.

# HHS ORAL HEALTH INITIATIVE 2010

**The Head Start Roadmap  
To Excellence**

*U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*

Administration for Children & Families

## ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

### *Head Start Dental Home Initiative*

**Public Health Significance:** This initiative will utilize a public-private partnership to develop a national infrastructure focused on recruiting and supporting pediatric dentists and general dentists from private and public sectors to serve as dental homes for young, racially and ethnically diverse children at high-risk for dental disease. The Office of Head Start (OHS) has awarded a 5 year, \$10 million contract to the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) to establish a national network of dental homes for Head Start and Early Head Start children. AAPD is recruiting and training private sector pediatric and general dentists in optimal oral health care practices for working with high-risk populations, such as Head Start. AAPD will assist Head Start programs in obtaining comprehensive oral health services to meet the full range of Head Start children's oral health needs. This partnership will provide parents, caregivers and Head Start staff with the latest evidence-based information on how they can help prevent tooth decay and establish a foundation for a lifetime of oral health. Securing dental homes for Head Start children will impact their long-term oral health and help reduce oral health disparities. It also will educate Head Start staff and parents about the importance of oral health to children's overall health and development, the significance of helping young children acquire healthy habits, and the value of establishing dental homes for children at an early age.

#### **Focus Area:**

- emphasize oral health promotion/disease prevention
- increase access to care
- enhance oral health workforce
- eliminate oral health disparities

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National Institutes of Health  
The Nation's Medical Research Agency

NIDCR  
National Institute of  
Dental and Craniofacial Research  
National Institutes of Health

## **CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION AND THE NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH *National Oral Health Surveillance Plan***

**Public Health Significance:** While the US supports the collection of an extensive array of oral health related data, there has never been a comprehensive National Oral Health Surveillance Plan. Building on a long history of collaboration, the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR), CDC's Division of Oral Health (DOH) and CDC's National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) have launched an effort to enhance the oral health surveillance data capability in the U.S. and develop a long-range plan for surveillance of oral diseases, conditions, and behaviors. This project is the start of a process that aims for a coordinated and integrated approach for data which are vital to create a "report card" of oral health for the US, track oral health inequalities, initiate public health action and guide state- and national-level policy to improve oral health. Better utilization of data and dissemination of findings are also important aspects of this initiative. The initiative will include a multi-pronged strategy to ensure the effective and efficient use of resources devoted to oral health surveillance. The first step will consist of a meeting of a panel of experts who will examine the characteristics of current oral health surveillance in the U.S., discuss the spectrum of data that are needed, and suggest strategies for the future. Consultations between NIDCR, DOH and NCHS will follow to prioritize and create a plan of action taking into account the input from the expert panel. Finally, a Memorandum of Understanding will be created to facilitate and guide the work and outline areas of responsibility.

### **Focus Area:**

- emphasize oral health promotion/disease prevention
- increase access to care
- enhance oral health workforce
- eliminate oral health disparities

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**CENTERS FOR MEDICARE AND MEDICAID SERVICES**  
***Review of Innovative State Medicaid Dental Programs***

**Public Health Significance:** CMS considers access to dental care for our beneficiaries a priority. CMS has started to undertake a review of State reported dental data and additionally has requested input from external partners to help CMS identify Medicaid dental programs of interest. CMS is reviewing State Medicaid programs that have implemented innovative strategies that have increased access to dental care. Information is currently being gathered from these reviews performed in eight states with innovative practices and/or higher dental utilization rates. CMS will be sharing the information learned during these reviews with other states for the purpose of improving the overall delivery of dental services throughout all Medicaid programs.

These reviews are being undertaken in an effort to identify promising or best practices that can be highlighted nationally and shared with underperforming states to assist them in enhancing their coverage of dental care. A summary of the reviews will be available this summer.

**Focus Area:**

- increase access to care
- eliminate oral health disparities

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## **HEALTH RESOURCES AND SERVICES ADMINISTRATION**

### ***National Study on an Oral Health Initiative***

**Public Health Significance:** The National Academy of Science/Institute of Medicine's Board on Healthcare Services and Board on Children, Youth and Families will assess the current oral healthcare system, examine preventive oral care interventions, their use and promotion, explore ways of improving health literacy for oral health, and review elements of a potential DHHS oral health initiative. The "Initiative" study will assess the current oral health care system, taking into account recent evaluations and prior recommendations; examine preventive care interventions, their use and promotion, including greater health literacy; and review elements of a national oral health initiative encompassing regulations, statutes, programs, research, data, financing, and policy. A final report and recommendations to the Department will be available in draft form on March 31, 2011. The report will propose short-term and long-term activities for the Secretary of HHS and the HRSA Administrator to consider implementing an HHS Oral Health Initiative; include a strategic plan and a way to evaluate and support an oral health initiative; and recommend messages and a strategy to increase the visibility of existing HHS oral health activities and improve awareness of oral health services available to the public.

#### **Focus Area:**

- emphasize oral health promotion/disease prevention
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- eliminate oral health disparities

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### ***National Study on Oral Health Access to Services***

**Public Health Significance:** The National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine through collaborative efforts between the Board on Children, Youth and Families and the Board on Health Care Services will study the oral health system of care in the Nation with particular focus on issues which disproportionately impact the underserved who are most vulnerable to oral disease and the safety net providers, both public and private intended to serve them. The "Access" study will assess the current U.S. oral health system of care, exploring its strengths, weaknesses and future challenges; describing a desired vision for how oral health care for these populations should be addressed by public and private providers focusing on safety net programs serving populations across the lifecycle specifically women and children. A final report and recommendations will be issued by August 29, 2011.

#### **Focus Area:**

- increase access to care
- eliminate oral health disparities

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**Indian Health Service**  
The Federal Health Program for American Indians and Alaska Natives

## **INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE**

### ***The Early Childhood Caries Initiative***

**Public Health Significance:** Dental caries is a significant health problem for AI/AN of all ages, but the magnitude of the problem is greatest among very young children. To reduce the burden of dental disease, age-specific prevention programs must be developed and targeted at those at highest risk. The Indian Health Service's Division of Oral Health has developed and is in the process of implementing and expanding the reach of an Early Childhood Caries Initiative to promote prevention and early intervention of dental caries in young children through an interdisciplinary approach. Components of the program include: early oral health assessments by community partners such as Head Start, the Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC), nurses, physicians, and Community Health Representatives (CHRs); fluoride varnish application by these community partners and dental teams; dental sealants on primary teeth at an early age by dental teams; the use in interim therapeutic restorations (ITR) to reduce the need for children having to go to the operating room to receive dental treatment; and the establishment of a national oral health surveillance system to measure the impact of this initiative.

#### **Focus Area:**

- emphasize oral health promotion/disease prevention
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- eliminate oral health disparities

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**NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH**  
***Clinical and Translational Science Program***

**Public Health Significance:** The NIH National Center for Research Resources (NCR) is supporting and promoting an effort to build a national dental consortium research infrastructure network. As part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, funding has been provided for the development of a web-accessible clinical research toolkit which will be used by investigators to facilitate the standardization of dental research across the consortium of dental schools/programs. The nation's progress against oral diseases will be accelerated by rigorous clinical studies whose outcomes have the potential to fundamentally change dental practice and improve oral health. This project which is part of NCR's Clinical Translational Science Award Program will help ensure that new discoveries lead to improved public health by reducing the time it takes for laboratory discoveries to become treatments for patients, engage communities in clinical research, and train future clinical and translational researchers.

**Focus Area:**

- emphasize oral health promotion/disease prevention
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## **OFFICE OF MINORITY HEALTH**

### ***A Cultural Competency E-learning Continuing Education Program for Oral Health Professionals***

**Public Health Significance:** In an effort to ensure that all people entering the health care system receive equitable and effective treatment, the Office of Minority Health (OMH) has developed a cultural competency training program for specific provider groups such as physicians and nurses. In response to the pervasive nature of oral health disparities, the OMH will launch a new Cultural Competency E-learning Oral Health Continuing Education Program in 2010 that will target oral health disparities. This web-based project will be evidence based in nature and will include needs assessment focus groups, extensive literature reviews and the input from experts in the field who will serve on a National Project Advisory Committee.

#### **Focus Area:**

- enhance oral health workforce
- eliminate oral health disparities

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# The Office on Women's Health

in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

## THE OFFICE ON WOMEN'S HEALTH

### *Oral Health as Part of Women's Health Across the Lifespan*

**Public Health Significance:** Women, more than any other demographic group, guide their behavior and decision-making around health using a wider variety of online and offline resources. Women also consult health care providers, friends, and family to manage their health and the health of others in their role as caregivers. To capitalize on this, the Office on Women's Health developed *womenshealth.gov* and *girlshealth.gov*, two of the most reliable online and offline information resources on women's and girls' health. As Government products, both websites do not represent any commercial interest and provide free information on a wide range of health issues. In its new role supporting the oral health initiative, the Office on Women's Health will set out to change the perception of oral health's impact on overall health by incorporating accurate oral health information into existing OWH educational programs for health professionals and the public. Avenues for enhanced messaging include the OWH national network in support of the Text4baby (*Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies*) initiative, *National Women's Health Week*, *BodyWorks* and *Best Bones Forever!* Programs, and the *Quick Health Data Online* toolkit. OWH also will work with regional programs to highlight oral health activities.

#### Focus Area:

- emphasize oral health promotion/disease prevention
- enhance oral health workforce
- eliminate oral health disparities

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