

TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

UPDATE ON ORAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Presented to
Governor Bill Haslam
and
Tennessee Dental Association**

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**John J. Dreyzehner, MD, MPH, FACOEM
Commissioner**

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I

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The mission of the Department of Health is to protect, promote, and improve the health and prosperity of people in Tennessee. In advancement of this goal, the Department's Oral Health Services Section (OHS) operates on the fundamental principles of preventing and controlling oral diseases through organized community efforts. This information is a synopsis of the results of following those principles, in support of that mission, during Fiscal Year 2013. The Fiscal Year 2013 expenditure for Tennessee Department of Health dental programs was \$13,068,738 and is broken down by program below.

Key Service Deliveries Fiscal Year 13

Oral Disease Prevention—Cavity Free in Tennessee

- A total expenditure of \$50,924 (calculated based upon an average of \$2.88 per application) provided 17,682 at risk children with oral health screenings, referrals, and fluoride varnish applications by nursing staff in Tennessee Department of Health medical clinics.

Public Health Dental Clinical Facilities

- A total expenditure of \$6,215,019 provided 16,040 children with 26,183 dental visits and 5,015 adults with 8,509 visits to the 51 Department of Health rural dental clinics located in 49 rural counties and one regional office. A total of 21,055 individuals made more than 34,600 patient visits receiving more than 140,400 dental services (105,991 to children) at a cost per service of \$44.28 compared to TennCare's cost per service of \$51.66.

School-Based Dental Prevention Project (SBDPP)

- A total expenditure of \$6,185,725 provided more than 123,000 at risk children with dental screenings, more than 51,580 dental exams, more than 162,000 with oral health education, and 38,696 with more than 209,000 sealants in 311 schools.

Dental Funding Initiatives

- A total expenditure of \$617,070 provided 20,569 dental extractions through 16 grants awarded by the Department for emergency dental services for adults¹.

Distribution of Information

- The Department of Health distributed traditional paper literature, covering a broad range of oral health information, to other agencies and the public. Simultaneously, the Department maintains an Oral Health services website to provide information to public health professionals, parents, community leaders, and the general public.
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INTRODUCTION

This report is provided in response to Tennessee Code Annotated 68-1-303(b), which requires the Commissioner of Health, to provide an annual report to the Governor and the Tennessee State Dental Association (TDA) on the work done by and under the Commissioner in regards to distribution of literature throughout the state regarding the proper way to care for the teeth.

The mission of the Department of Health is to protect, promote, and improve the health and prosperity of people in Tennessee. In advancement of this goal, the Department's Oral Health Services Section (OHS) operates on the fundamental principles of preventing and controlling oral diseases through organized community efforts. Statewide school-based dental programs have been expanded to offer high-risk populations preventive services to include sealants, oral health education, screenings to identify children with unmet dental needs, referrals for these children, and follow-up on those children with urgent needs. Comprehensive dental services for children and emergency dental care to adults, unable to access care in the private system, are provided in fixed facilities located in rural health departments statewide. In an effort to improve access to dental services for high risk children in underserved areas, the Tennessee Department of Health operates 3 mobile dental clinics as staffing permits. These mobile clinics, when staffed, provide comprehensive dental services at school sites.

Summary of Dental Services

Program	Number Served	Number of Services
Cavity Free in Tennessee Fluoride Varnish Program	17682	17682
Public Health Rural Dental Clinical Program	21,055 (16040 children)	140,459 (105,991 to children)
School Based Dental Prevention Program	38,696	209,900
Total	77,433	368,041

III

ORAL HEALTH

A. Oral Disease Prevention

Fluoride Varnish Initiative

Tennessee Code Annotated 63-5-109(14) allows registered nurses and nurse practitioners to apply fluoride varnish to at risk underserved persons in public health clinics.

The Oral Health Services Section continues to conduct programs such as **Cavity Free in Tennessee**. This program targets children 0-5 years of age being seen in health department medical clinics for preventive dental services. Nursing staff screen these children and refer them to dental providers in addition to applying fluoride varnish twice yearly.

During Fiscal Year 2013, 17,682 at risk children were screened, referred, and had fluoride varnish applied by nursing staff in Tennessee Department of Health medical clinics.

B. Dental Services

1. *Public Health Dental Clinical Facilities*

The Department of Health offers comprehensive dental services to children and emergency care to adults on a sliding fee scale basis according to income. Dental services are available, dependent upon staffing, at 51 local health department clinics located in 49 rural counties and one regional office across the state. Dental services are typically offered 1 to 5 days per week. During the Fiscal Year 2013, 16,040 children made 26,183 visits to Department of Health rural dental clinics and 5,015 adults made 8,509 visits. In total during Fiscal Year 2013, 21,055 individuals made 34,692 patient visits receiving 140,459 dental services in the Department of Health rural dental clinics.

2. *School-Based Dental Prevention Project (SBDPP)*

This program is a statewide comprehensive preventive program involving dental screenings, referrals and follow-up for dental care, oral hygiene education, and sealants. SBDPP targets children in grades K-8 in schools with 50% or more free and reduced lunch programs. During Fiscal Year 2013, more than 123,000 children received dental screenings, more than 51,500 had a dental evaluation, more than 162,000 received oral health education, and more than 209,000 sealants were placed on 38,000 children in 311 schools.

3. *Mobile Dental Clinics*

In an effort to improve access to dental services for high risk children in underserved areas, the Oral Health Services Section conducts a mobile dental program. East, central, west Tennessee each have one mobile dental clinic providing comprehensive care to low-income children at school sites as dental

staff are available. During FY 2013, the mobile dental clinical program was not operational due to lack of staffing.

4. *Dental Funding Initiatives*

In Fiscal Year 2013, the Department awarded 16 grants for emergency dental services for adults¹ and under these grants 20,569 extractions were performed.

5. *Distribution of Information*

The Department of Health's website includes an Oral Health Services site that provides a broad range of information to public health professionals, parents, community leaders, and the general public. The web site address for Oral Health Services is <http://health.state.tn.us/oralhealth/index.html>.

Staff in all of the Department's dental programs distributes literature and educational information to individuals served. This information addresses a wide variety of preventive dental topics such as the importance of oral health and proper oral hygiene techniques. Requests for oral health information from agencies and the public are addressed by staff at the local, regional and central office level.

¹ Statement of compliance with 2013 Tenn. Pub. Acts, ch. 1061 (the "Eligibility Verification for Entitlements Act" as required by Tenn. Code Ann. 4-57-106(b)). The Tennessee Department of Health, including local health departments, boards and commissions, has implemented protocols and policies to verify that every adult applicant for "public benefits" is an United States citizen or a "qualified alien," within the meaning of Chapter 1061.