



UPDATE ON ORAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Presented to
Governor Bill Lee
And
Tennessee Dental Association**

December 16, 2019

**Lisa Piercey, MD, MBA, FAAP
Commissioner**

Table of Contents

- I. Executive Summary
- II. Introduction and Summary of Dental Services
- III. Oral Health
 - A. Oral Disease Prevention
 - 1. Nurse's Fluoride Varnish
 - 2. School-Based Dental Prevention Program (SBDPP)
 - 3. Community Water Fluoridation
 - B. Dental Services
 - 1. Public Health Dental Clinical Facilities
 - 2. Dental Transport Programs
 - 3. Adult Dental Funding Program
 - 4. Distribution of Information

I

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The mission of the Tennessee Department of Health is to protect, promote, and improve the health and prosperity of people in Tennessee. Operating within this mission the Tennessee Department of Health's Oral Health Services (OHS) strives to prevent and control oral diseases through organized community efforts. The following information is an outline of those efforts during Fiscal Year 2019. The Tennessee Department of Health dental program expenditures for Fiscal Year 2019 were \$17,720,230 and are broken down by each program below.

Key Service Deliveries Fiscal Year 19

Oral Disease Prevention—Nurse's Fluoride Varnish Program

- An expenditure of \$208,380 (calculations based on an average of \$5.00 per application) provided 41,676 at risk children with oral health screenings, referrals, and fluoride varnish applications by Public Health Nurses in Tennessee Department of Health medical clinics.

School-Based Dental Prevention Project (SBDPP)

- An expenditure of \$6,833,398 provided more than 55,111 at risk children with dental screenings or dental exams, 165,001 with oral health education, and 45,451 children received 292,830 sealants in 409 schools and 116 community projects at an average cost of \$23.34 per sealant.

Public Health Dental Clinical Facilities

- An expenditure of \$10,180,597 provided 15,027 children with 23,787 dental visits and 5,888 adults with 10,459 visits to the 38 staffed Department of Health dental clinics. A total of 20,915 individuals made 34,246 patient visits receiving 169,644 dental services (124,166 to children) at an average cost of \$60.01 per service.

Adult Dental Funding Program

- An expenditure of \$497,855 provided 26,274 dental extractions and 7,343 dental cleanings, at a cost of \$14.81 per service. The grants were awarded by the Uninsured Adult Health Care Safety-Net Program.¹

¹ Statement of compliance with 2012 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.

Distribution of Information

- The Department of Health published the first addition of the Tennessee State Oral Health Plan during 2017. The State Oral Health Plan, in coordination with the State Health Plan, offers a blueprint for improving the health of people in Tennessee. The 2019 annual update was delivered to the plan's stakeholders in June of 2019. The update included a Dental Care for Tennesseans Map of dental resources, located on the department's website <https://www.tn.gov/health/health-program-areas/oralhealth/dental-care-for-tennesseans.html>. The map and the entire Oral Health Plan continues to be broadly distributed throughout the state.
- The Department of Health distributed traditional paper literature covering a broad range of oral health information to other agencies and the general public. The Department has an Oral Health Services website to provide information to public health professionals, parents, community leaders, and the general public.

II

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 to inform the population of the “proper way to care for teeth”.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states tooth decay (cavities) is one of the most common chronic conditions of childhood in the United States and nearly one-third of all adults in the United States have untreated tooth decay. Tooth decay is a threat to oral health across the lifespan. 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 continue to offer high-risk populations preventive services to include oral health education, screenings, silver diamine fluoride, fluoride varnish, sealants, referrals for children with unmet dental needs, and follow-up on 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 partners with local school systems to offer a School Transport Program. The local school system transports target population children to local health department dental clinics, which provide comprehensive dental services. Four clinical sites have partnered with area dental colleges, Meharry Medical College and the University of Tennessee Health Science Center, where fourth year dental students rotate through the clinic and help provide comprehensive dental services to a targeted adult population.

Summary of Dental Services

Program	Number Served	Number of Services
Nurse’s Fluoride Varnish Program	41,676	41,676
School Based Dental Prevention Program (Sealants)	45,451 (children)	292,830 (teeth sealed)
Public Health Rural Dental Clinical Program	20,915 (15,027 to children)	169,644 (124,166 to children)
Adult Dental Funding Program	18,928	33,617
Total	126,970	537,767

III

ORAL HEALTH

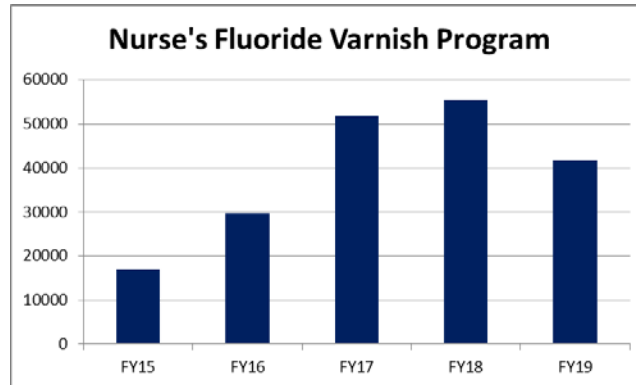
A. Oral Disease Prevention

1. Nurse's Fluoride Varnish Program

Tennessee Code Annotated § 63-5-109(14) allows Public Health Nurses to apply fluoride varnish to at risk underserved persons in public health clinics.

The Nurse's Fluoride Varnish Program targets children 0-5 years of age being seen in health department medical clinics. Nursing staff screen these children and refer them to dental providers in addition to applying fluoride varnish.

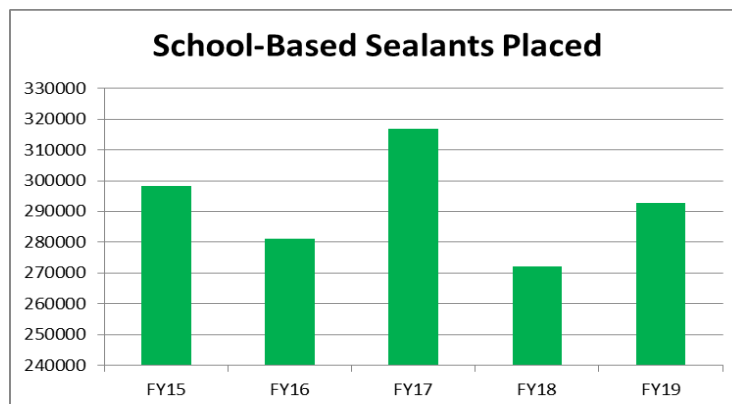
During Fiscal Year 2019, 41,676 (32,506 were 0-5 years of age) at-risk children were screened, referred, and had fluoride varnish applied by nursing staff in Tennessee Department of Health medical clinics.



2. School-Based Dental Prevention Program (SBDPP)

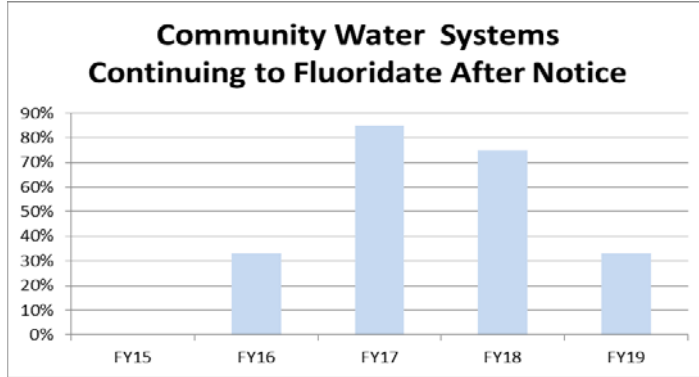
This program is a statewide comprehensive preventive program involving dental screenings, referrals and follow-up for dental care, oral hygiene education, silver diamine fluoride, fluoride varnish, and sealants. SBDPP targets children in grades K-8 in schools with 50% or more free and reduced lunch programs.

During Fiscal Year 2019, 55,111 children received dental screenings or a dental examination, 165,001 received oral health education, and 292,830 sealants were placed on 45,451 children in 409 schools and 116 community projects. During Fiscal Year 2019 the School Based Dental staff referred 1,446 high priority children with unmet dental needs for follow-up. Fiscal Year 2019 was the first year silver diamine fluoride (SDF) was offered by SBDPP; SDF was placed on 2,243 teeth for 606 children.



3. Community Water Fluoridation

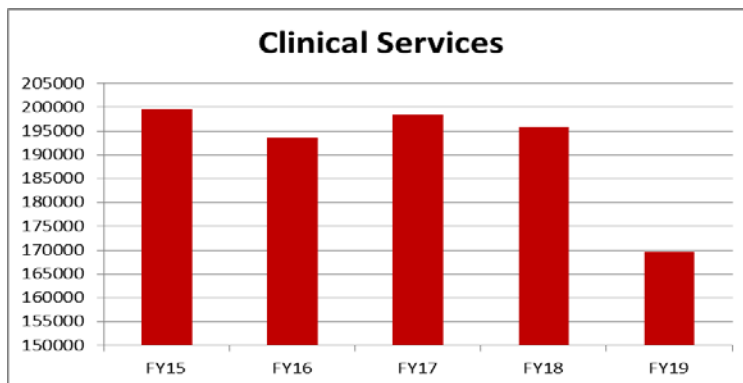
Tennessee Code Annotated § 68-221-708(c) states, any public water system which determines to initiate or permanently cease fluoridation, shall notify the Department of Environment and Conservation and the Department of Health within 30 days prior to any vote. Community water fluoridation, which is primary prevention, is the most effective and economical way to prevent tooth decay for all ages. During Fiscal Year 2019, three public water systems notified the Department of Health of their intent to cease fluoridation, with intervention from health department staff and community partners, 33% (1) of those systems continued to fluoridate.



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 according to income. Dental services are available at the 38 staffed local health department clinics located in rural counties as well as one regional office. Dental services are typically offered from one to five days per week. During Fiscal Year 2019, 15,027 children made 23,787 visits to the dental clinics and 5,888 adults made 10,459 visits. Throughout Fiscal Year 2019, 20,915 individuals made 34,246 patient visits receiving 169,644 dental services within the Department of Health dental clinics.



2. *Dental Transport Programs*

In an effort to improve access to dental services for high risk children in underserved areas, the Tennessee Department of Health partners with local school systems to offer a School Transport Program. The local school system transports target population children to local health department dental clinics, which provide comprehensive dental services. During Fiscal Year 2019 the School Transport Program provided dental services to 1,507 patients.

3. *Adult Dental Funding Program*

In Fiscal Year 2019, the Department provided funding for 26,274 dental extractions and 7,343 dental cleanings. The grants were awarded by the Department for emergency dental services for adults².

4. *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 website address for Oral Health Services is <https://www.tn.gov/health/health-program-areas/oralhealth.html>.

The State Oral Health Plan has been broadly distributed across the state to community partners and stakeholders. The plan is accessible from the department's website at <https://www.tn.gov/health/health-program-areas/oralhealth/state-oral-health-plan.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 the central office levels.

² Statement of compliance with 2012 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.