



2024 Annual Report of Partner Activities

Idaho Oral Health
**Improvement
Plan** 2021-2026

A Collaborative Approach to Oral Health in Idaho
For all who support a vision that promotes oral health
and improves quality of life.

Introduction

Oral health is essential to quality of life. It is fundamental to all who live in Idaho, and it encompasses much more than just healthy teeth. It should be considered a predictor for the general health of our population. Without good oral health, our citizens and communities are faced with escalating loss of productivity, pain, and expense that infiltrates businesses, schools, and personal health. The [2021-2026 Idaho Oral Health Improvement Plan](#) is designed to be a roadmap for the strategic vision for the improvement of oral health leading to the overall health of all who live within the borders of Idaho.

The Plan was collaboratively created with input from a 51-member work group with the expectation that partners in the oral health profession and beyond would collectively engage in efforts to enhance the oral health of our citizens. Oral health champions from across the state are actively participating in eliminating barriers, promoting oral health for all Idahoans and striving to address and improve oral health outcomes for all.

Annual Report Process

Throughout the year, each year, the Idaho Oral Health Alliance (IOHA) collects reports from partner organizations and individual oral health champions who have undertaken activities that align with the Plan and are working to improve, support, or otherwise positively impact oral health for Idahoans. These oral health champions understand that, in addition to providing preventive services and referring patients for dental care, we also must address health-related needs, service gaps, and barriers to care in order to significantly influence the health of life for all Idahoans.

Any oral health champion may [submit reports](#) to the IOHA. Reports will be gathered throughout each year, but are due by December 31, in order to be included in that year's report.

For 2024, we thank those who submitted reports.

- 100 Million Mouths Campaign for Provider Education
- Central District Health
- College of Southern Idaho Dental Hygiene Program
- Delta Dental of Idaho
- Genesis Community Health
- Idaho Community Health Center Association
- Idaho Head Start Association
- Idaho Head Start Collaboration Office
- Idaho Oral Health Alliance
- Idaho Oral Health Program
- Idaho State University Department of Dental Hygiene
- MCNA Dental (Managed Care of North America)
- North Idaho College Head Start
- Pocatello Free Clinic
- Saint Alphonsus Health System – Community Health Workers
- Smiles for Idaho
- Southeastern Idaho Public Health
- Southwest District Health
- Special Care Dentists of Idaho
- Terry Reilly Health Services

2024 Annual Report of Partner Activities

The reports in this section were submitted by oral health partners and chronicle the outstanding work they have accomplished during the last year. Because partners self-report their activities to the IOHA each year, this is not an exhaustive list of the projects undertaken in 2024 by all Idaho oral health champions. We are honored to highlight the wonderful work of these partners and hope that more oral health champions will submit reports for the 2025 edition. Reports must be submitted by December 31 of the current year using the report link found at [Idaho Oral Health Improvement Plan](#).

The 2021-2026 Idaho Oral Health Improvement Plan Framework

The Plan defines three areas of focus (Prevention, Access, and Policy & Infrastructure) and identifies several goals and objectives for each. Some goals target specific populations like children and adolescents or adults, while other goals address broader needs like population-based collaborations, access to care, oral health interventions, and surveillance, infrastructure, and policy. Baseline measures and benchmarking data sources identified in the Plan will be reviewed and measured in the final report for the five-year plan. Annual reports are designed to tell the stories of partner engagement, share good news, and encourage others to participate in this effort.

Areas of Focus

- **Prevention:** Emphasizes Objectives and Activities that address delivery of oral health education/literacy messaging (for patients and providers), prevention services, community health programs, and delivery of care in non-traditional settings.
- **Access:** Identifies Objectives and Activities that address common barriers to care, innovative and effective solutions for oral healthcare delivery, and medical-dental collaboration.
- **Policy & Infrastructure:** Recognizes Objectives and Activities that ensure access to care and prevention services, funding for oral healthcare education and programming, and the collection and public availability of surveillance data.



Prevention Activities

This section supports the improvement of oral health prevention for all who live within the borders of Idaho.

Central District Health (CDH)

Organization Contact: Susan Ellis, RDH, Oral Health Supervisor
cdh.idaho.gov/hl-oralhealth.php



First Teeth Matter Inspirational Story

Region: Central District Health (Health District 4)
Target Population: children ages 0-5

CDH has an oral health clinic called First Teeth Matter (FTM) that serves as a pre-dental home for families with infants/small children and provides early screening and education until such a time that parents can establish a dental home for the child. The reasons for needing a pre-dental home are many, including limited finances, lack of transportation, limited hours for regular dental clinics, and a shortage of dentists willing to see children under age 5. FTM focuses on helping parents understand the decay process, offering education on the steps of prevention, and connecting them to a dentist. A caries risk assessment is included in each visit and follow-up appointments assist with behavior modification using motivational interviewing and goal setting. This approach to preventive care is extremely important, however, sustaining this service in the health district is difficult due to financial sustainability. FTM depends on grants, limited reimbursement, and some self-pay clients to make this clinic possible.

In 2024, FTM incorporated silver diamine fluoride (SDF). The first family that was offered this option was Hispanic and did not speak English. They had just moved from Mexico and were struggling with the language. Mom was very nervous and insecure. Family resources were very limited and the inability to communicate was adding to the insecurity. Fortunately, an Hispanic assistant from CDH was able to assist in communication. Working with the hygienist, she was able to teach the concepts of decay and how to prevent further disease. Mom was very apprehensive about anesthesia for her daughter. FTM provided education, care, and SDF, along with a referral to a dentist. SDF was applied two times and the lesions became stable. Mom was thrilled to have the understanding and education to know that the decay was stopped without the trauma of surgery for her young child.

College of Southern Idaho (CSI) Dental Hygiene Program

Organization Contact: Tiffany Clark, RDH, Director of Dental Hygiene
csi.edu/programs/dental-hygiene/default.aspx



Free Sealant Clinic

Region: Twin Falls
Target Population: children ages 6-18

During February, the CSI Dental Hygiene Program provided free sealants, screenings, and fluoride varnish to approximately 50 children during the annual Give Kids a Smile/ National Children's Dental Health Month event. CSI dental hygiene students and volunteer dentists provided the services.

Prevention Activities Cont.

Delta Dental of Idaho

Organization Contacts: Shaina Cales, MPH, CPH, Manager, Community Outreach, Indirect Programs and Cami Sindon, RDH-EA, CDHC, Manager, Community Outreach, Direct Care Programs

deltadentalid.com/Community-Outreach



Grins on the Go

Region: statewide

Target Population: children ages 0-18

Delta Dental of Idaho's *Grins on the Go* program delivers vital oral health services to youth that prevent disease and keep kids in school. The program prioritizes low-income schools and offers free preventive services such as fluoride varnish applications and dental sealants, oral health education, and screenings to refer to local dentists for treatment needs. Delta's programs provided prevention services and/or education to more than 23,000 kids throughout Idaho.



Rethink Your Drink Water Bottle Filling Station Grant Program

Region: statewide (schools awarded in all seven public health districts)

Target Population: youth grades K-12

In 2024, Delta Dental of Idaho provided twelve Idaho schools with new Elkay® water fountain/bottle filling stations through the Rethink Your Drink grant program. The program encourages children to drink water instead of sugar-sweetened beverages which can lead to oral health issues such as tooth decay, also known as cavities. Schools also received reusable water bottles, dental care kits, and Rethink Your Drink [educational materials](#) for more than 7,850 students and staff.



Land of Smiles Virtual Education Program

Region: statewide

Target Population: youth grades K-3

This Delta Dental of Idaho virtual education program for students K-3, includes a 15- or 30-minute video shown in the classroom and accompanied by pre- and post-tests to check for knowledge. Every student that participates receives a Smile Bag with a toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, and a brushing chart. Supplementary curriculum is available for teachers to further oral health education in the classroom. Schools can visit the Delta website to [schedule the video viewing](#) and download the [curriculum](#). Classrooms that complete the brushing and flossing chart can [request oral health books](#). In 2024, approximately 10,200 students from 109 elementary schools in Idaho viewed the educational program.

Prevention Activities Cont.



Smile Squad Oral Health Girl Scout Patch Program

Region: Girl Scouts of Silver Sage Council territory

Target Population: children ages 5-18

Delta Dental of Idaho partners with the Girl Scouts of Silver Sage Council to offer the Smile Squad patch where scouts learn about oral health and its connection to overall health and wellbeing. Scouts review good dental habits, try oral health experiments, and learn about the importance of brushing and flossing daily. The materials and patches are available free of charge to troops of the Silver Sage Council. In 2024, 72 Girl Scouts earned the patch to proudly display on their vest or sash.



Dental Care Kit and Resource Donations for Community Partners

Region: statewide

Target Population: all populations

Delta Dental of Idaho donates infant finger brushes, toddler brushes, youth kits, adult kits, and educational resources to community partners across the state. Some of the supported entities include: The Idaho Food Bank, Interfaith Sanctuary, Idaho Free & Charitable Clinics, Federally Qualified Health Centers, Head Start programs, United Way of Treasure Valley, and other early education programs. Delta donated approximately 114,000 items in 2024.

Idaho Oral Health Alliance (IOHA)

Organization Contact: Jennifer Wheeler, Executive Director

idahooralhealth.org



IdahoSTARS Childcare Education Outreach

Region: statewide

Target Population: childcare providers, Head Start teachers

The IOHA continued efforts to educate childcare providers and Head Start teachers on the importance of oral health by submitting quarterly news articles to the IdahoSTARS program and by promoting the oral health training module on the web-based learning platform within the IdahoSTARS program. The module introduces early childhood caregivers and teachers to the importance of oral health, offers tips for implementation of policies and practices that lead to better oral care and hygiene, and provides education based in science that will help teachers coach parents on changes that can be made at home. Since the creation of the module in 2022, 22 providers/educators have completed the Spanish course and 536 have finished the English version.



Social Media Outreach to Parents of Infants and Young Children

Region: statewide

Target Population: parents of children ages 0-5

Thanks to generous support from DentaQuest, the IOHA revived a social media campaign targeting parents, grandparents, and people of childbearing age with social media messaging focused in the important concept that Baby Teeth Matter. The campaign materials directed viewers to the IOHA website, [Baby Teeth Matter](#).

Prevention Activities Cont.

Idaho Oral Health Program, Idaho Department of Health & Welfare (IOHP)

Organization Contacts: Kelli Broyles, RDH, Oral Health Program Manager and Sowmya Natarajan, BDS, MPH, Health Program Specialist

healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/health-wellness/healthy-infants-children/oral-health



Oral Health Education for Community Health Workers

Region: statewide

Target Population: community health workers

The IOHP created opportunities to educate nontraditional dental workforce members on important oral health topics thus promoting the prevention of oral health diseases. In June 2024, a presentation on "Improving Access to Oral Healthcare" was delivered at the 2024 Community Health Workers Learning Collaborative at the ISU Meridian campus. Taleah Bankos Jacobsen, RDH, CDHC from Terry Reilly Health Services (TRHS) assisted in the presentation to share how TRHS leverages Community Dental Health Coordinators and Community Health Workers to identify patients at high risk for dental diseases, ultimately improving both their oral health and overall health outcomes.



Idaho's First Adult Basic Screening Survey

Region: statewide

Target Population: adults ages 60+

The IOHP has implemented Idaho's first Adult Basic Screening Survey and Health Assessment to gather primary data on the oral health needs of Idaho seniors. The data gathered through the survey will help measure the burden of dental disease and identify service gaps in oral health on a sample representative of Idaho seniors. The survey is targeted towards seniors attending the Idaho Fit and Fall Proof™ program or the Senior Nutrition Program sites across the state. The survey is expected to be complete by fall of 2025 and results will be available in spring 2026.

MCNA Dental

Organization Contact: Kendra Aracena, Quality Improvement Director

mcnaid.net/members



Member Outreach to Promote Preventive Care

Region: statewide

Target Population: all populations

As part of the MCNA Preventive Care Campaign to improve oral health literacy and increase access and preventive services, MCNA conducted the following activities:

- MCNA's dedicated Care Connections team conducted outbound calls targeting members who had not received their annual dental checkup and preventive services such as dental sealants and fluoride application in order to provide education and assist with scheduling an appointment. As a result, 12% of members completed a dental checkup within 90 days, and of those members, 51% received a preventive service.

Prevention Activities Cont.

- Monthly postcards were mailed to members who were eligible but had not received dental sealants on their first permanent molars. Members were educated on the importance of dental sealants and the role they play to prevent dental caries. Members also received education on their available benefits. As a result, 7% of members received dental sealants within 90 days.
- Monthly preventive text messages were disseminated to members who had not received a dental checkup within the last six months to educate and encourage the member to schedule an appointment. For the year, 11% of members completed a dental checkup within 90 days of receiving a text message.
- As part of MCNA's Bright Beginnings Program, pregnant members receive a dental kit and oral health education about the importance of timely dental care for expectant mothers and preventive care for their children. Over four thousand dental kits were mailed in 2024, and 8% of pregnant women accessed care within 90 days of the mailing.
- MCNA's Member Advocate Outreach Specialists targeted schools in low literacy counties and donated the MCNA-produced book, "Itty Bitty Baby Teeth," to students in kindergarten through third grade. The book is specifically designed to increase the understanding of normal tooth loss in children, alleviate dental anxiety, and encourage routine preventive dental care.

North Idaho College (NIC) Head Start

Organization Contact: Jess Geiger, MS Ed, Health and Nutrition Manager
nic.edu/headstart



Oral Healthcare in Childcare Settings

Region: Lakeland Head Start
Target Population: children ages 0-5

NIC Head Start teachers provided intentional curriculum around oral health. In this photo, a dental hygienist is discussing the importance of brushing well and brushing all surfaces of the tooth.



NIC/Panhandle Health District Partnership Deliver Care

Region: NIC Head Start programs in Boundary, Bonner, Kootenai, Shoshone, and Benewah counties
Target Population: children ages 0-5

NIC Head Start and Panhandle Health worked together to complete oral screenings and provided fluoride varnish for 166 children in the 5 northern counties of Idaho.



Prevention Activities Cont.

Southeastern Idaho Public Health (SIPH)

Organization Contact: April Sluder, RDH, Oral Health Program Coordinator/Dental Hygienist
siphidaho.org/community-health/oral-health.php



Happy & Healthy Smiles School-Based Sealant Program

Region: Southeast Idaho Health District 6

Target Population: children ages 5-18

This school-based sealant program provides dental screenings, prophylaxis (cleanings), dental sealants, and fluoride varnish to students in rural areas with populations that are less likely to receive oral healthcare. These programs are conducted in school settings with licensed oral health professionals using portable dental equipment. Permission slips are required for children to participate. Parent reports are sent home and referrals to local dentists are made as needed. Last school year in Southeast Idaho, the health district's oral health program saw 567 kids and provided 2,012 dental sealants.



Oral Health Education Presentations for Children/Adolescents

Region: Southeast Idaho Health District 6

Target Population: children ages 0-18



Oral health education presentations and programs are offered to schools, daycare centers, Head Start facilities, community health fairs, and church, professional, and civic groups. Programs are tailored to grade level and ability and are provided at the request of administrators. Educational topics include: general oral health, how cavities form and how to prevent cavities, overall health and how it is linked to oral health, optimal oral hygiene techniques, and the importance of fluoride.



Oral Health Screenings and Fluoride Varnish for Children

Region: Southeast Idaho Health District 6

Target Population: children ages 2-18



This program provides oral health screenings and fluoride varnish applications in Head Start programs, daycares, schools, and at the local health district offices. This is a great opportunity for kids to get more comfortable with dental professionals, provide oral health education to families, and help make referrals back to their dentist or establish a new dental home. Last school year, 960 children were seen through this program.



Pregnancy and Oral Health Presentations

Region: Southeast Idaho Health District 6

Target Population: adults ages 19-55

SIPH offered oral health presentations to expecting parents, parents with young children, and providers who work with expecting parents. This program shares the knowledge that untreated gum disease in pregnancy can harm their systemic health and may be linked to low-birth weight babies and preterm births. It is also known that mothers can unintentionally pass cavity-causing bacteria to newborns thus increasing the risk for childhood tooth decay. This program shares this important information, refers to local dentists, and shares resources like toothbrush kits and educational materials.

Prevention Activities Cont.

Southwest District Health

Organization Contact: Virginia Reyna-Walling, RDH, Lead Hygienist

swdh.id.gov/clinic-services/oral-health



School-Based Sealant Program

Region: Southwest District Health 3

Target Population: children ages 0-18



In 2024, the health department was grateful to partner with the Idaho Oral Health Program (IOHP) to provide small sample-sized tubes of toothpaste to students at various schools. The impact of this simple gift was both surprising and heartwarming. One moment that truly stood out was when a young student received his toothpaste with wide, amazed eyes. He looked up and said, "Thank you, is this for me? I don't have toothpaste at home." His excitement was contagious as he turned to the student behind him, proudly showing off his new toothbrush and toothpaste, proclaiming, "It's my lucky day!" This experience highlighted the significance of small gestures and their power to make a difference in the lives of children. It also underscored the critical need for basic hygiene supplies among some students. Thanks to IOHP's support, a bit of joy and health education were brought into these young minds, reminding everyone of the importance of community partnerships in addressing unmet needs.

100 Million Mouths Campaign in Idaho

Organization Contact: M. Colleen Stephenson, RDH-ER, MS, State Representative

hsdm.harvard.edu/100-million-mouths-campaign



100 Million Mouths Campaign for Provider Education

Region: statewide

Target Population: all populations

The 100 Million Mouths Campaign, created within Harvard University's *Center for Integration of Primary Care and Oral Health*, intends to train fifty oral health education champions over the next decade to work with health professional schools and programs to integrate oral health into their curricula to bridge gaps in oral health access. Idaho representative, Colleen Stephenson, RDH-ER, MS, presented oral health education to the ISU nursing and physician assistant programs. By training faculty in these partner programs, the hope is to create an educational system that will generate future primary care providers who can help improve the oral health of at least 100 million mouths over the next decade.

Access Activities

The following list of Activities supports the Goals and Objectives for Access.

Central District Health (CDH)

Organization Contact: Susan Ellis, RDH, Oral Health Supervisor
cdh.idaho.gov/hl-oralhealth.php



Oral Healthcare Refugee Success Story

Region: Central District Health (Health District 4)



Target Population: children ages 6-18

Some of the CDH oral health services assist the regional refugee population. We had a 6-year-old refugee named Clara (fictional name) from Africa who did not speak English. She was very nervous and afraid. She was escorted by her classmate, Omar (fictional name). Although he didn't speak her language, the two of them shared a strong level of trust. Omar told us she wanted us to hold her hand. We did all that we could do to make sure she felt comfortable and safe. We had Omar lay in the chair so she could see what it would be like. Once it was Clara's turn, she laid down in the chair, and Omar stayed by her side and held her hand. He communicated with her for us by opening his mouth. Clara then opened her mouth and let us check her teeth. She was still apprehensive about having fluoride varnish swiped on her teeth, so we pretended to put some on Omar's. Clara gave a sheepish smile as if saying, "Ok, I get it!" and proceeded to let us apply the fluoride. From what we were told, this was the first dental screening or treatment Clara has received of any kind. We know how important oral health is and that the service CDH provides is much needed preventive care for the children in our community. Our team was touched by Omar's kindness toward Clara. Our ability to reach refugees or other children is limited to the funding and grants we receive through organizations like the Idaho Oral Health Program, Maternal & Child Health, CDC, and Delta Dental of Idaho.

College of Southern Idaho (CSI) Dental Hygiene Program

Organization Contact: Tiffany Clark, RDH, Director of Dental Hygiene
csi.edu/programs/dental-hygiene/default.aspx



Free Senior Care for Nursing Home Residents

Region: Twin Falls

Target Population: adults ages 60+

The CSI Dental Hygiene Program provided free education, denture cleaning, screenings, and oral hygiene products to area nursing home residents. The program reached over 300 residents.

Access Activities Cont.

Delta Dental of Idaho

Organization Contacts: Shaina Cales, MPH, CPH, Manager, Community Outreach, Indirect Programs and Cami Sindon, RDH-EA, CDHC, Manager, Community Outreach, Direct Care Programs

deltadentalid.com/Community-Outreach



Grins on the Go

Region: statewide

Target Population: all populations

Throughout the year and across the state, *Grins on the Go* participated in community health fairs and pop-up events which improve access to oral healthcare for all Idahoans. Education, informational materials, sealants, screenings, and fluoride were provided. In 2024, Delta teams saw over 1,300 adults and children during visits to: Ukrainian Center, Learning Lab, Communities United by Health Fair, Children's Museum, Wendell summer school, Jerome County Fair, Salvation Army Resource Fair, Shoshone-Paiute Community Health, Jerome Community Fair, Special Olympics, Love Heals, and the Mexican Consulate. During the summer months, Delta supplied interactive education to children in community parks where lunches were distributed.



GrinWell for Youth

Region: statewide

Target Population: youth pre-K – 12 without dental insurance



GrinWell for Youth provides a \$2,000 one-time gift over the course of one year to children up to age 18 from income-qualifying families that have no dental coverage. This small program is focused on youth with immediate needs—the child is in pain, has cavities, abscess, gingivitis, etc., and requires a medical or dental professional to identify the child and then parental completion of an application. Once the immediate needs are addressed, this program helps establish a dental home for follow-up preventive care. In 2024, 122 children were identified, referred, and enrolled.



GrinWell for You

Region: statewide

Target Population: low-income adults ages 26-34 and 60+ without dental insurance

GrinWell for You is a free one-year dental benefit of \$1,850 for income qualifying Idaho adults ages 26-34 and 60+. Recipients enroll and can gain access to dental care from any provider in the Delta Dental PPO network. Coverage includes some restorations, dentures, and preventive care. Participants cannot have other insurance, e.g., Medicaid or Medicare Advantage with dental, unless the Medicare Advantage Plan has embedded preventive-only dental coverage. Upon completion of the first year, participants can enroll in a subsidized plan called *GrinWell Protect* to continue receiving preventive care at the established dental home. In 2024, 262 Idahoans enrolled in *GrinWell for You* and 52 participants joined *GrinWell Protect*.

Access Activities Cont.



Community Dental Health Coordinator (CDHC) Funding for Terry Reilly Health Services (TRHS)

Region: Treasure Valley

Target Population: high-risk adults including individuals with substance use disorders, pregnant women, and patients with diabetes

In 2024, Delta Dental of Idaho donated \$50,000 to TRHS to partially fund their CDHC position for year 2 of a 3-year commitment. The CDHC's role focused on serving high risk patients completing duties including preventive dental services and screenings, care coordination and referrals, and community education and outreach. The CDHC was employed February-December and served over 900 patients and community members.

Genesis Community Health

Organization Contact: Josh Campbell, Director of Operations

genesiscommunityhealth.com



Free Clinic Care Story

Region: Ada and Canyon counties

Target Population: adults ages 19+

By December, Genesis Community Health, one of Idaho's free and charitable clinic organizations, had provided 1,047 dental visits and care coordination calls to low-income uninsured individuals in Ada and Canyon counties and thus met its goal to provide care to 1,000 individuals in need. Visits included diagnostic, restorative, and preventive care. Of those served, most had not seen a dentist for many years, and some had never seen a dentist. Here is one story of a patient who was impacted: In his first call to the clinic, 46-year-old "Peter" (name changed to protect privacy) was crying as he explained that the sharp edge of a broken tooth was cutting his tongue when he ate. "Can Genesis help me with the pain?" asked Peter. He no longer could endure the torture but didn't have any insurance and had not visited a dentist in 15 years. Peter was overjoyed to learn from the intake coordinator that he qualified for Genesis' medical and dental programs. The successful treatment he received eliminated all his pain. A few weeks later, Peter returned to express his gratitude with some of his artwork as a gift to the clinic.

Idaho Community Health Center Association (ICHCA)

Organization Contact: Susan Ault, Director of Care Improvement

idahochc.org/home



Support for Federally Qualified Health Centers to Deliver Oral Healthcare

Region: statewide

Target Population: all populations

In May, ICHCA provided training on "Fundamentals of Running an Effective FQHC Dental Program" to its 15 member health centers. In addition to special training opportunities, ICHCA provides peer networking opportunities on a quarterly basis. In April, an on-site training on Minimally Invasive Dentistry was provided for the new Community Family Clinic Dental Office in Idaho Falls. All regional health centers were invited.

Access Activities Cont.

Idaho Oral Health Alliance (IOHA)

Organization Contact: Jennifer Wheeler, Executive Director
idahooralhealth.org



Pilot Program for In-Clinic Oral Health Training for Medical Providers

Region: statewide

Target Population: medical providers

Thanks to an IOHA board committee, an in-clinic training program was developed to assist medical practices in adopting basic oral health services including assessment and application of fluoride varnish. The training, based on best practices and research by the American Academy of Pediatrics, was piloted with nurse practitioners at Central District Health. According to the Idaho Smile Survey, led by the IOHP, Idaho children have, for the last 26 years, had extremely high instances of and risk for cavities by the time they reach third grade. The hope is that, if medical professionals join in this preventive effort, we can reduce the severity and issue of early childhood caries.



Collaborative Efforts to Address Oral Health Needs in Emergency Department Settings

Region: statewide

Target Population: all populations

An ongoing collaborative effort between the IOHA, Genesis Community Health, Terry Reilly Health Services, Community Health Workers, and Saint Alphonsus Health System continues to track needs and research solutions to address the issues emergency departments face regarding individuals who have dental pain or oral health needs and lack access to dental care.



Collaborative Efforts to Address Oral Health Needs Orofino/Clearwater Corridor

Region: Public Health District 2

Target Population: all populations

The IOHA, in partnership with the Clearwater Economic Development Office and St. Marie's/Clearwater/Kootenai Hospital, continues to seek solutions for individuals with difficulties in accessing dental care in the Clearwater Corridor in North Central Idaho.

Idaho Oral Health Program, Idaho Department of Health & Welfare (IOHP)

Organization Contacts: Kelli Broyles, RDH, Oral Health Program Manager and Sowmya Natarajan, BDS, MPH, Health Program Specialist
healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/health-wellness/healthy-infants-children/oral-health



Grants to Support Oral Health Workforce Activities

Region: statewide

Target Population: all populations

The IOHP received competitive grant funding from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) titled Grants to States to Support Oral Health Workforce Activities. This grant allowed the IOHP to award funding to three Idaho entities for projects aimed at increasing access to care and expanding the dental workforce to better reach Idaho's older adult populations. Projects utilized teledentistry to support oral health screenings by nursing students in community-based settings; hygiene students were able to deliver

Access Activities Cont.

patient-specific oral hygiene services to residents of long-term care facilities, and dental residents gained experience providing services in rural locations. The projects in these expanded care settings made services available to people where they live, work, or commonly visit, thus removing the barriers of transportation, long waits to schedule exams, and trouble finding an affordable provider.

The following counts provide data for services delivered through HRSA-22-050 grant funding during 2024:

- # of individuals receiving oral care services through HRSA funding: 861
- # of teledentistry encounters involving patient care (asynchronous): 286
- # of individuals receiving an oral health screening: 567
- # of individuals receiving preventive services (SDF and/or FV): 184
- # of assisted oral hygiene sessions delivered to adults with special needs living in assisted living and memory care facilities ~ 40 sessions each month



Education on Interprofessional Care for Dental Providers

Region: statewide

Target Population: Idaho dentists providing care to older adults

In November, the IOHP and the Idaho State Dental Association (ISDA) partnered to host a webinar for dental providers about the importance of interprofessional care to improve the oral health of older adults. Dr. Leonard Brennan, DMD, from the Harvard School of Dental Medicine, and his interprofessional team from Maine presented to the audience. The webinar offered 1 ADA CERP CE credit.

Idaho State University (ISU) Department of Dental Hygiene

Organization Contact: Stephanie Penrod, RDH, MS, Assistant Professor, Principal Investigator, Interim Associate Chair

isu.edu/dentalhygiene

Teledentistry and Mobile Care for Assisted Living Patients

Region: Southeastern Idaho

Target Population: adults ages 56+



Dental hygiene students in their senior year at ISU complete rotations outside of their routine clinic schedule. ISU has affiliated with Caring Hearts Assisted Living in Pocatello to provide memory care residents with dental hygiene care. Memory care residents, in particular, often struggle with maintaining oral hygiene due to cognitive decline or physical limitations. This elderly population is at increased risk for oral health problems due to age-related conditions like dry mouth, gum disease, and tooth decay. Students and faculty bring the mobile dental clinic to the assisted living center and provide care to the residents one day a week during the fall and spring semesters. Dental hygiene students provide preventive care including oral cancer screenings, periodontal assessments, x-rays, periodontal debridement, denture cleanings, SDF applications to gross carious lesions, and fluoride treatments. Since September, the teams provided 24 screenings which included denture cleaning and inspection as well as toothbrushing and fluoride application to natural teeth. Residents that had natural dentition and were mobile were

Access Activities Cont.

appointed to visit the mobile clinic for x-rays, cleanings and fluoride. Each patient also received a teledentistry exam by a dentist. The program works closely with the staff at the assisted living center to communicate the dental needs of the residents to their families so they can receive the advanced treatment they may require. This program, called Bengal Smiles for Life, is a mutually beneficial initiative that enhances the clinical education of dental hygiene students while improving the oral health and quality of life for memory care residents.

MCNA

Organization Contact: Kendra Aracena, Quality Improvement Director
mcnaid.net/members



Member Outreach to Promote Access to Dental Care

Region: statewide

Target Population: all populations

As part of the Idaho member outreach campaign to improve oral health literacy and increase access and preventive services, MCNA conducted the following activities:

- Monthly postcards were mailed to members who had not received an oral evaluation within the last six months. Members were educated on the importance of routine dental exams to detect and prevent dental caries. Members also received education on their available benefits. As a result, 11% of members completed a dental visit within 90 days and of those members, 50% received a preventive service.
- MCNA's Member Advocate Outreach Specialists (MAOS) partnered with Special Olympics Idaho for their Southwest Fall Regionals event and provided oral health education to over 100 athletes.
- MCNA collaborated with Dr. Meshack-Hart and Terry Reilly Health Services office staff to host a "Van Day" in Parma, ID. By utilizing their mobile van, MCNA was able to leverage the opportunity to target members in a rural area and increase accessibility to a dental provider. MCNA staff was onsite and provided oral health flyers, dental kits, and other giveaway items to all who attended.

Pocatello Free Clinic (PFC)

Organization Contact: Sherrie Joseph, Director
pocatellofreeclinic.com



Decreasing Oral Health Service Gaps in Southeast Idaho

Region: Bannock, Bingham, and Power counties

Target Population: adults ages 19+, special needs population

The Pocatello Free Clinic is a nonprofit healthcare provider serving southeast Idaho committed to reducing oral health service gaps among at-risk groups. Over the past year, PFC has expanded its dental program significantly, improving access to care through innovation, partnerships, and resource optimization. Notably, PFC has expanded teledentistry outreach to agricultural sites, where a dental hygienist conducts exams and takes x-rays. Dentists review the images remotely, provide assessments, and schedule follow-up appointments as needed, bringing essential care directly to rural communities.

Continued on next page.

Access Activities Cont.

The clinic has also grown its team, hiring its first dedicated dental hygienist who serves as co-dental coordinator and works alongside the medical clinic coordinator to better integrate medical and dental care. Additionally, PFC hosts dental residents from ISU's Advanced General Dentistry Program and has recruited volunteer dental assistants to expand services without increasing costs. This year, PFC increased the availability of dental care to three days/evenings a week, compared to two in previous years, enabling more patients to receive preventive and restorative services.

The clinic's dental program has flourished thanks to the generous support of key funders who make these innovations possible. Special thanks to the Idaho Dental Foundation for their \$2,500 grant to fund the travel unit, allowing the clinic to bring care to rural communities; Delta Dental of Idaho for their \$25,000 contribution toward purchasing critical dental equipment; United Way for their \$26,500 donation, which directly supports the dental program; City of Pocatello CDBG funds, which provided \$18,500 to expand dental services for low- and moderate-income residents of Pocatello; and the Idaho Oral Health Program within the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, whose \$30,000 grant helped expand telehealth services at our clinic and in rural Idaho. Through these innovations and collaborations, the Pocatello Free Clinic is making significant progress in aligning with the Idaho Oral Health Improvement Plan by enhancing prevention, increasing access, and integrating oral health into primary care for those who need it most.

Saint Alphonsus Health System – Community Health Workers (CHW)

Organization Contact: Hannah Ivens, Community Health Worker



Dental Resource Integration in Medical Settings

Region: Treasure Valley

Target Population: all populations

Saint Alphonsus CHWs play a pivotal role in fostering meaningful connections with patients by providing support in non-clinical care settings. Through screenings, CHWs identify and address a spectrum of needs ranging from transportation and access to healthy food to navigating insurance complexities and securing stable housing. CHWs extend their outreach to patients who seek emergency care for dental reasons in order to facilitate tailored connections with suitable care providers aligned with their specific needs and insurance coverage. Saint Alphonsus and their team of CHWs have cultivated strong partnerships with community organizations that support collaborative efforts to offer diverse array of resources and referrals, thus ensuring patients can overcome barriers hindering access to essential services. Dental resources have been integrated into the mobile health clinic as part of the outreach program. By enhancing the support network and leveraging communities, the aim is to empower individuals to overcome challenges and achieve optimal health and well-being.

Access Activities Cont.

Smiles for Idaho

Organization Contact: Kacie Benson, RDH



Oral Healthcare Support for the Elderly Population

Region: statewide

Target Population: adults ages 56+

In 2024, Smiles for Idaho proudly established itself as a dedicated organization committed to improving oral health across the state. The focus has been on growing meaningful partnerships with local organizations to expand the reach and better serve communities in need, particularly the elderly population. The organization is actively seeking local partners who share a passion for enhancing access to dental care for seniors. Additionally, the team had the privilege of collaborating with the Idaho Oral Health Program to contribute to a comprehensive HRSA report, furthering their mission to support statewide efforts in advancing oral health initiatives.

Southeastern Idaho Public Health (SIPH)

Organization Contact: April Sluder, RDH, Oral Health Program Coordinator/Dental Hygienist
siphidaho.org/community-health/oral-health.php



Annual Give Kids a Smile Event

Region: Southeast Idaho Health District 6

Target Population: uninsured children ages 2-14



Southeastern Idaho Public Health partnered with the ISU Dental Hygiene Department, ISU Dental Residency, and local dentists for this annual event to provide free, easily accessible dental services to qualifying children who are uninsured, underinsured, or have no access to dental care. These children receive their preventive care for free at ISU Dental Hygiene Clinic, and referrals are made to local dentists for dental concerns and/or restorative care. In 2024, the effort helped 84 children and provided approximately \$50,000 worth of dental care for free!

Southwest District Health

Organization Contact: Virginia Reyna-Walling, RDH, Lead Hygienist
swdh.id.gov/clinic-services/oral-health



Delivery of Clinic Services

Region: Southwest District Health 3

Target Population: all populations

Southwest District Health is proud to continue its mission of improving community health through school-based dental clinics. These clinics provide vital services, including dental screenings, fluoride varnish applications, dental sealants, oral health education, and referrals for follow-up care. This school year, the oral health team partnered with 29 schools across the district, reaching a couple thousand students and empowering them with tools for lifelong oral health. The program also extends its efforts beyond schools, collaborating with WIC, daycares, and WICAP programs and the Hispanic Cultural Center Health Events to ensure families have access to essential preventive services. This past

Access Activities Cont.

summer, the program offered in-house services at the Caldwell site, providing personalized oral health education and goodie bags—generously supplied by the Idaho Oral Health Program—to WIC clients attending breastfeeding classes and expectant mothers preparing for their new journey. With unwavering dedication, Southwest District Health and the Oral Health Program continue to prioritize community outreach, emphasizing the critical connection between oral health and overall well-being. Together, we are fostering healthier smiles and healthier lives across the region.

Special Care Dentists of Idaho

Organization Contact: Kaci B. Jensen, DDS, President
theisda.org/patient-resources/special-care-dentists-of-idaho



Oral Health and the Special Olympics

Region: Regional Special Olympic Games were hosted in Caldwell

Target Population: special needs children and adults



Special Care Dentists of Idaho is a group that strives to improve the quality of life for vulnerable populations through oral health access and education. In June, sixteen volunteers gave their time at the Special Olympics events in Caldwell. There were multiple screening stations and an education area to demonstrate hygiene tools and homecare. There was a mouth guard station where approximately 400 guards for Special Olympians were made. Over 100 mouths were screened and strong attempts were made to make sure each athlete had a dental home.

Terry Reilly Health Services (TRHS)

Organization Contact: Taleah Bankos Jacobsen, RDH, CDHC, Medical-Dental Integration Specialist
trhs.org/dental



Partnership with Idaho Youth Ranch

Region: Idaho Youth Ranch Facility in Middleton

Target Population: children ages 11-17

Terry Reilly has partnered with the Idaho Youth Ranch to provide medical and dental services to youth residing at their Residential Center for Healing and Resilience. This new center near Middleton sits on 258 acres of streams, forests, fields, and nature. It is a peaceful place for children ages 11-17 to heal from trauma, depression, family conflict, substance use disorders, mood disorders, and other behavioral and mental conditions. A Terry Reilly medical provider is onsite weekly to provide routine care, the mobile dental van offers access to treatment once a month, and patient navigators provide assistance with process needs. Youth needing care outside of normal treatment times are seen at Terry Reilly clinics or Urgent Care locations.

Access Activities Cont.



Oral Health Prevention and Care Coordination Embedded in Medical Team

Region: Treasure Valley

Target Population: children ages 0-18, adults ages 19-55



The Community Dental Health Coordinator (CDHC) dental hygienist is embedded within the TRHS medical team to provide prevention and care coordination to patients that are already scheduled with the medical providers. Populations of focus include: children seen during their well child check appointments, patients managing diabetes, new patients never seen in the clinic, and patients receiving medication assisted treatment. The aim of this work is to educate and prevent dental caries in high-risk populations and to provide care coordination for those who do not have a dental home.

Policy & Infrastructure Activities

The following list of Activities supports the Goals and Objectives for Policy & Infrastructure.

Delta Dental of Idaho

Organization Contacts: Shaina Cales, MPH, CPH, Manager, Community Outreach, Indirect Programs and Cami Sindon, RDH-EA, CDHC, Manager, Community Outreach, Direct Care Programs

deltadentalid.com/Community-Outreach



Delta Dental of Idaho Dental Scholarships

Region: North Idaho College (NIC), College of Western Idaho (CWI), College of Southern Idaho (CSI), College of Eastern Idaho (CEI), and Idaho State University (ISU)

Target Population: adults ages 19-55

In order to help develop and diversify the oral health workforce in Idaho, Delta Dental of Idaho offered 19 scholarships totaling approximately \$63,000 for dental assisting (DA), dental hygiene (RDH), and first-year dental school students in 2024. Scholarships are prioritized for students demonstrating financial need and for those who are first generation students. Some scholarships at CWI, CEI, and CSI are reserved for bilingual Spanish-speaking students. Delta Dental of Idaho staff attended the Treasure Valley and Eastern Idaho Commission on Hispanic Affairs Youth Leadership Summits and the Idaho Dept. of Education Waypoint Conference to promote the dental field and the scholarships.



Delta Dental of Idaho 2024 Oral Health Grant Program

Region: statewide

Target Population: adults 19-55

In 2024, Delta Dental of Idaho held two cycles for its discretionary grant program. Idaho organizations applied for assistance in the areas of infrastructure and workforce capacity, access to dental health care, and oral health prevention and education. Over \$252,000 was awarded to 10 organizations in June and December. June recipients were Public Health Idaho North Central District, Southwest District Health, the Idaho Oral Health Alliance, Pocatello Free Clinic, Wellness Tree Community Clinic, and Terry Reilly Health Services. December recipients were Adams County Health Center, Snake River Community Clinic, Central District Health, and College of Southern Idaho Foundation.



Exploring Careers in Oral Health

Region: statewide

Target Population: youth grades K-8



Delta Dental of Idaho developed educational materials for students between kindergarten and 8th grade to introduce them to careers in the dental field. Projects included a coloring sheet for K-2nd grades, a word search for 3rd-4th grades, and a one-pager for 5th-8th grades. Materials were made available to the *Grins on the Go* teams to use while providing classroom education. Program expansion is expected in 2025 with the addition of an accessible website for educators.

Policy & Infrastructure Activities Cont.

Idaho Head Start Association (IHSA)

Organization Contact: Megan Woller, MPA, Executive Director
idahohsa.org



Support for Oral Health for Idaho Head Start

Region: statewide

Target Population: children ages 0-5

At the beginning of the year, IHSA hosted its annual conference convening the thirteen Head Start programs across the state. Central District Health tabled all three days of the conference, providing oral health education to the attendees which ranged from Head Start leaders, education managers, health services managers, family services managers, and parents. From September through November, IHSA conducted Hill visits in Washington, D.C. and arranged site visits in Idaho to promote the positive impacts of Head Start. The CSI Head Start program provided photos of the kids practicing teeth brushing at Head Start and used these for postcards to lawmakers.



Idaho Head Start Collaboration Office, Idaho Department of Health & Welfare

Organization Contact: Jessica Sproul, Director



Support for Oral Health for Idaho Head Start

Region: statewide

Target Population: children ages 0-5

The relationship between the Idaho Head Start Collaboration Office (IHSCO) and the IOHA continues to be a priority, providing significant benefits in promoting the importance of oral health. The Idaho Head Start Collaboration Director serves as an active member of the IOHA steering committee, supporting statewide oral health efforts and encouraging Head Start grant recipients and state partners to participate in IOHA child-care training opportunities. Oral health is a critical focus of the Head Start Program Performance Standards, which emphasize the importance of preventive care, early detection, and timely treatment of oral health issues. These standards ensure that children have access to essential oral health services as part of their overall well-being and school readiness. By collaborating with IOHA, IHSCO strengthens its ability to support these standards, fostering healthy habits that contribute to children's development and lifelong success.

Policy & Infrastructure Activities Cont.

Idaho Oral Health Alliance (IOHA)

Organization Contact: Jennifer Wheeler, Executive Director
idahooralhealth.org



Input for Next Dental Medicaid Contract

Region: statewide
Target Population: all populations

The IOHA, in concert with the ISDA, provided significant feedback and suggestions to the Idaho Division of Medicaid in preparation for the next Idaho dental Medicaid contract process.



Oral Health Representation at the State Level

Region: statewide
Target Population: all populations

The IOHA continues efforts to increase awareness of oral health for Idahoans through participation on three statewide committees. Our thanks to: Dr. Daron Lind for representing the IOHA and oral health on the Idaho Voices for Children/Idaho Kids Covered steering committee; Dr. Ernest Meshack-Hart for representing the IOHA and oral health on the state's Medicaid Advisory Committee, and to Dr. Troy Clovis for representing the IOHA and the oral health community on the MCNA Advisory Committee.

Idaho Oral Health Program, Idaho Department of Health & Welfare (IOHP)

Organization Contacts: Kelli Broyles, RDH, Oral Health Program Manager and Sowmya Natarajan, BDS, MPH, Health Program Specialist
healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/health-wellness/healthy-infants-children/oral-health



Idaho Smile Survey

Region: statewide
Target Population: youth grade 3

During the 2023-2024 school year, the IOHP provided funding to six public health districts to complete the 2024 Idaho Smile Survey. Delta Dental of Idaho provided in-kind support to assist the IOHP with this survey. This was the sixth Idaho Smile Survey of third-grade students conducted since 2001. Typically, this survey is completed every four years, however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and related challenges, there was a seven-year gap between this survey and the previous survey. The 2024 survey examined 1,678 students at 82 randomly selected schools for the prevalence of untreated tooth decay, treated tooth decay or missing permanent teeth due to tooth decay (caries experience), the presence of dental sealants, and the need for restorative dental care. Data collected from this report allows the IOHP to assess the current oral health status of children and help determine where efforts can be directed to improve the oral health of Idaho's children. Data from the survey is available on Idaho's Oral Health Surveillance System (IOHSS) dashboard. A full report will be available in 2025.

Thank you...

to all oral health partners who submitted reports for 2024. Any oral health champion may [submit reports](#) to the IOHA. Reports will be gathered throughout each year, but are due by December 31, in order to be included in that year's report. We hope you'll share your 2025 efforts!



Acronyms

AAP	American Academy of Pediatrics	HP2030	Healthy People 2030
AAPD	American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry	IAFP	Idaho Academy of Family Physicians
AAPHD	American Association of Public Health Dentistry	ICHCA	Idaho Community Health Center Association
ADA	American Dental Association	ICOM	Idaho College of Osteopathic Medicine
AIDPH	American Institute of Dental Public Health	IDHA	Idaho Dental Hygienists' Association
AMA	American Medical Association	IDHW	Idaho Department of Health & Welfare
ASTDD	Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors	IOHA	Idaho Oral Health Alliance
BRFSS	Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System	IOHP	Idaho Oral Health Program
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	ISDA	Idaho State Dental Association
CDH	Central District Health	ISPD	Idaho Society of Pediatric Dentists
CDHC	Community Dental Health Coordinator	MCH	Maternal & Child Health
CHEMS	Community Health Emergency Medical Services	MCNA	Managed Care of North America
CHW	Community Health Worker	PFC	Pocatello Free Clinic
FQHC	Federally Qualified Health Center	PHD	Public Health District
HPSA	Health Professional Shortage Area	PRATS	Pregnancy Risk Assessment Tracking System
HPV	Human Papillomavirus	SDF	Silver Diamine Fluoride
HRSA	Health Resources and Services Administration	SIPH	Southeastern Idaho Public Health
HS	Head Start/Idaho STARS/Office of Head Start Collaboration	SSP	School-based Sealant Program
		SWDH	Southwest District Health
		WIC	Women, Infants, and Children Programs

Idaho Oral Health Alliance



The Idaho Oral Health Alliance (IOHA) started in 1998 with a vision of optimal oral health for Idahoans. Over the years the statewide nonprofit has built a successful corporate sponsorship program and membership base that includes dental and medical professionals, insurers, educators, government officials, policy champions, and citizens all working toward the IOHA mission which is to *lead collaborative efforts to bring optimal oral health to Idahoans through education, advocacy, and program development*. The IOHA staff, board, members, sponsors, and partners are committed to improving the oral health of Idahoans. We believe the best way to do that is by facilitating discussion among partners across the state who share a desire to improve the overall health of Idahoans. The IOHA strives to understand the unique perspective of our constituents and embrace the cross-pollination of ideas. By bringing these groups together, IOHA keeps the focus where it should be—on Idahoans. To learn more or to join as an individual or organizational member, visit idahooralhealth.org

Idaho Oral Health Program



The Idaho Oral Health Program (IOHP), within the Division of Public Health in the Idaho Department of Health & Welfare, was established by the state in 1951 and continues to create strong stakeholder partnerships that lead to improved oral health for all who live in Idaho. It offers infrastructure and essential resources to support create, implement, and evaluate oral health initiatives and policies. The IOHP is responsible for endorsing and supporting preventive services, utilizing evidence-based best practice strategies, and promoting community disease prevention interventions. The IOHP partners with state and community groups to develop and offer the following services:

- School-based/linked oral health programs
- Dental sealants, fluoride varnish, and SDF applications
- Teledentistry
- Systems for collecting, tracking, and reporting oral disease and program information
- State oral health improvement plans
- Media and messaging campaigns to educate Idahoans on oral disease and the importance of optimal oral hygiene
- Training and technical assistance from national oral health subject matter experts on evidence-based best practices

To learn more or review Idaho oral health data, visit healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/health-wellness/healthy-infants-children/oral-health

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