

## EAGLE COUNTY SMILES

More than 225 children in Eagle County now have access to dental care they didn't have before, thanks to a local collaborative effort called Eagle County Smiles.

The coalition, now in its second year of treating the under- and uninsured children of Eagle County, was established in 2006 in response to a survey that showed one in four Eagle County third graders had untreated tooth decay. Untreated oral diseases prevent children from concentrating and learning in school, can lead to malnutrition, exacerbate conditions like heart disease, asthma, and diabetes, and promote premature and low-birthweight deliveries for pregnant women.



Each April for the past two years, four dental students, one dental assistant, one dentist, and one associate professor from the University of Colorado School of Dentistry have arrived to conduct a thorough dental screening, education, x-rays, fluoride varnish, and a treatment plan. This year, the task force provided free screens for 219 uninsured and underinsured children.

Treatment is completed in the summer when the University's Colorado Smilemakers van comes to Eagle County to treat those children identified with ongoing oral health issues. Several of the children seen at the screening had oral health issues so severe that they needed to be seen for treatment long before the Colorado Smilemakers van arrives. As a result, several area dentists stepped up to provide the emergency care that these children needed at a significantly reduced cost.

For many of these children, it's the first time they've seen a dental provider. For others, it's an opportunity to receive routine dental care they are otherwise unable to access.

In the 2007-2008 school year, the Dental Sealant Program provided service to 36 schools. The program screened more than 1,200 second grade students, and provided sealants to 971 students. The Dental Sealant Program also followed up with 826 third grade students and provided additional services.

"I truly love being part of this program," said Lodl "It's so special to be able to provide health care, and dental care, for those who may not be able to otherwise have access."

