

DENVER HEALTH SEALANT PROGRAM

In 2006, The Denver Health Foundation was awarded a three year, \$104,745 oral health grant from the Caring for Colorado Foundation to support the Denver Public Schools Dental Sealant Program. This grant has allowed Denver Health to extend dental services beyond its 12 existing School-based Health Centers to 36 elementary schools throughout the Denver Public Schools system.

Jacalyn Lodl, dental hygienist, Denver Health School-based Clinics heads the program.

Every week, Lodl takes a van full of portable dental equipment to a different elementary school to set up operatories. These portable operatories provide dental screenings, sealants, and fluoride varnish applications for all second grade students who have their parent's permission to participate in the program.

“School-based clinics are the primary source of health care and dental care, for many children, especially those from low income families,” said Lodl. “All services are done free of charge, which allows all second grade children the opportunity to receive dental care, regardless of their ability to pay.”

Dental sealants are very thin plastic coatings that are applied to the chewing surfaces of permanent molars where food and bacteria easily collect. Sealing these chewing surfaces significantly reduces the chance of decay. Applying dental sealants is a relatively easy procedure, it doesn't require any anesthesia, and requires only about five minutes to apply.



Second graders who have participated in the sealant program receive follow-up evaluations as third graders to verify that the sealants have remained intact. Repairs and replacements are done during this evaluation, the students are re-screened, and sealants are applied to any new permanent molars.

A fluoride varnish application is also done at this time.

Over 90 percent of sealants remain intact one year after initial application. Studies have shown that one-half of sealants remain in place 10 years after application.

