

## THE SAN JUAN KIDS CAVITY PREVENTION PROGRAM

An ambitious new children's school-based dental program called the San Juan Kids Cavity Prevention Program was launched in 2008 with the goal of dramatically reducing cavities and enhancing care for more than 950 kids in San Miguel, Ouray and west Montrose Counties.

473 students from eight area elementary schools and three preschools (Naturita, Paradox, Norwood, Ridgway, Ouray, Telluride) participated in the first treatment round which concluded in July 2008. With the help of a portable dental field unit, all the students received an oral screening, cleaning, fluoride treatment, sealants, education and a preventive care kit. 48% of the students had no cavities. 509 sealant treatments were provided to 175 children. 12% reported never having seen a dentist.



Children with cavities and other dental needs are referred to their local dentist. If they don't have a dental home, a medical shuttle transports them to the Community Dental Clinic in Montrose, the only pediatric dental clinic in the area that accepts Medicaid and the state's Children's Health Program (CHP+).

"Our goal is to create a dental home for every child and see that they get the preventive care they need, regardless of their ability to pay," says Gary Steinbach, preventive health administrator for the Telluride Foundation.

Having received its start-up funding from Caring for Colorado and the El Pomar Foundations, the school-based program is offered free of charge, and is a collaborative agreement with the Forsyth Institute in Boston, a world leader in oral and dental research. The Forsyth Institute reports that its preventive-care regimen reduces cavities by 50 percent after one treatment and eliminates new cavities altogether after three treatment rounds.

The Colorado program will be monitored on an on-going basis as part of a National Institutes of Health study. Steinbach says the program is unique in Colorado as it is the first to implement this model outside of Massachusetts. "Our results will be compared to 3500 children in the Boston area who are also under treatment."

