

# Topic Areas of Action Plan Focus

## Systems of Care

The Systems of Care topic area includes “Outcomes” directed at coordinating systems of care for more efficient and effective application to oral health. This topic area has overarching impact on all five actions in the National Call to Action and the Healthy People 2010 objectives.

### Priority Outcome #1

Integrate an oral check up with the standard physical exam.

### Why

“All primary care providers can contribute to improved oral and craniofacial health. Interdisciplinary care is needed to manage the oral health-general health interface. Dentists, as primary care providers, are uniquely positioned to play an expanded role in the detection, early recognition, and management of a wide range of complex oral and general diseases and conditions.” -- U.S. Surgeon General’s on Oral Health Report.

**Strategy 1: Incorporate lifelong dental care into current medical schedules (check-ups, immunizations, etc.) that are promoted to health care providers and the general public.**

### Suggested Partners

Medical and oral health providers and professional organizations, educational institutions, Colorado Clinical Guidelines Collaborative, advocacy groups, organizations and facilities that represent points of entry for medical care, local public health nurses, Colorado Family Physicians, Delta Dental of Colorado and other third party carriers, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment/Children with Special Health Care Needs, Covering Kids and Families, Colorado Consumer Health Initiative, Invest in Kids, Colorado Children’s Campaign, Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing



### Suggested Action Steps

- Action: Develop frequency of dental exams/screenings based on needs of targeted greatest risk populations.
- Action: Form partnerships (corporate businesses and possibly 9Health Fair) and develop a schedule or calendar of recommended health needs that incorporate dental check-ups/exams.
- Action: Incorporate oral health into existing ‘Health Passports’ and make it available in numerous places that are accessible to or accessed by families (medical and dental offices, community health clinics, pharmacies, etc.)

### Evaluation

The schedule is developed, promoted and used by health care providers and the public. Oral health incorporated into passports and made available.

**Strategy 2: Work with health care providers to increase access to oral screenings.**

### Suggested Partners

Medical and oral health providers and professional organizations, as well as organizations and facilities that represent points of entry for medical care, local public health nurses, Delta Dental of Colorado and other third party carriers, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Colorado

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Department of Health Care Policy and Financing, State Health Care Start Collaborative

## Suggested Action Steps

- Action: Determine target populations to be screened.
- Action: Increase referral networks between medical and dental providers.
- Action: Develop statewide, standardized screening procedures.
- Action: Identify areas of target populations and conduct screenings.
- Action: Allow reimbursement to medical providers for basic preventive dental procedures, such as screening and fluoride treatments.

## Evaluation

Screening protocol is developed and implemented. Screenings are conducted. Reimbursements are secured. Information is used to refer for follow-up care and program planning.

**Strategy 3: Collaborate and partner with physicians and the medical community to institutionalize oral evaluation and care as part of medical health exams.**

## Suggested Partners

Health and oral health providers and professional associations, health professional educational institutions, Colorado Association of Family Physicians, Colorado Clinical Guidelines Collaborative, Advocacy groups, Delta Dental Foundation, professional nurse practitioners' and physician assistants' organizations

## Suggested Action Steps

- Action: Hold a summit(s) to establish a collaborative plan.
- Action: Encourage a collaborative mode of thinking and a concept of whole health as part of medical school teaching/curriculum.

- Action: Establish relationships between dental associations/organizations and medical counterparts.
- Action: Design educational materials that stress the linkages between dentistry and medicine.

## Evaluation

Collaborative plan developed through summits. Relationships established between medical and dental associations and organizations. Educational materials designed that stress linkages between medicine and dentistry.

### Priority Outcome #2

Improve coordination and communication between the public and private sectors and systems of care.

## Why

“Collaboration and coordination between physicians and dentists are needed to provide integrated medical and oral health care.” -- U.S. Surgeon General’s Report on Oral Health.

**Strategy 1: Engage existing health professional organizations to enhance organizational collaboration and coordination.**

## Suggested Partners

Health care professional organizations, United Way, professional health education institutions, Area Health Education Centers

## Suggested Action Steps

- Action: Identify all of the groups to be included.
- Action: Utilize a summit type format to convene groups.
- Action: Set up a system for information exchange.
- Action: Develop educational collateral, networking, community partnerships, host continuing-education training.
- Action: Integrate systems of communication between health and oral health.

continued

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## Evaluation

Groups are identified and convened. System of communication exchange determined. Joint meetings and initiatives occurred. Survey to determine effectiveness and outcomes completed.

**Strategy 2: Collaborate with the medical community to assure oral health is a visible part of a medical home model.**

## Suggested Partners

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Prevention Services Division, Children with Special Health Care Needs, Covering Kids and Families, Colorado Consumer Health Initiative, Invest in Kids, Colorado Children's Campaign

## Suggested Action Steps

- Action: Promote the concept and the definition of the dental home.
- Action: Promote oral health as a component of general health to the medical community.

## Evaluation

Medical community references the dental home in policy and protocol documents. Document the increase in oral health screenings within medical model. Increase in dental referrals.

### Priority Outcome #3

Develop a collaborative workforce.

## Why

“Collaboration and coordination between physicians and dentists are needed to provide integrated medical and oral health care.” -- U. S. Surgeon General's Report on Oral Health.

**Strategy 1: Train medical and dental staff to recognize comprehensive health problems/needs and to refer patients appropriately.**

## Suggested Partners

Medical and oral health providers, health professional education institutions, Colorado Association of Family Physicians, health professional associations, Colorado Clinical Guidelines Collaborative, advocacy groups, 211 Colorado™, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Family Healthline

## Suggested Action Steps

- Action: Identify and promote emerging evidence based science that demonstrates the relationship between oral and general health.
- Action: Implement the appropriate model of public awareness (risk communication) to inform patients of potential oral health problems.
- Action: Develop information and referral systems.
- Action: Engage case managers for referrals.

## Evaluation

Emerging evidence based science identified and promoted. Risk communication campaign is developed. Referral and information programs are developed. Referrals are increased.

**Strategy 2: Provide curriculum to dental and dental hygiene students regarding infant/young child oral health care.**

## Suggested Partners

Professional health education institutions, oral health providers, foundations

## Suggested Action Steps

- Action: Assess current curricula.
- Action: Determine feasibility of changes to curricula.
- Action: Identify potential curriculum models.

## Evaluation

Curricula models are identified.

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## Priority Outcome #4

Reintroduce dental hygiene positions in school districts.

### Why

The dental hygiene profession has its beginnings in schools teaching children how to prevent dental disease with regular brushing. Dental hygienists can play a vital role in the primary prevention of oral disease.

As early as 1884, the prevention of dental disease in school children was recognized as important to their health. It took, however, another 30 years for Alfred C. Fones, the father of dental hygiene, to introduce dental hygienists. Bridgeport Connecticut employed dental hygienists from Fones school to work with elementary school children to provide preventive dental care and education.

**Strategy 1: Partner with state and local educational, dental, health, professional and community organizations to determine the feasibility for reintroducing dental hygienists in the schools.**

### Suggested Partners

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Prevention Services Division, Colorado Association for School-Based Health Care, Colorado Connections for Healthy Schools, Colorado Association of School Executives, Colorado Department of Education, Colorado State School Board, Colorado Community Health Network, health professional associations, state parent-teacher associations, public health agencies, Colorado Association of School Boards, Public Health Nurses Association of Colorado



### Suggested Action Steps

- Action: Investigate the reintroduction of dental hygiene positions in every school district (comparable to a school nurse).
- Action: Investigate and report on models and resources for position.
- Action: Develop a plan for implementing and evaluating program.
- Action: Engage school districts in pilot implementation.

### Evaluation

The report on models is available; pilot communities are identified; positions are created. Increase the number of children/students who receive oral health education, access screening, prevention services and routine care. Increase the number of children/students who receive dental sealants. Reduce the number of hours lost from school due to dental disease. Reduce the amount of dental disease.