

BE SMART AND SEAL THEM!

Dental project reaches vulnerable second graders with sealants, education and treatment services

Public Health Problem

- Tooth decay is the most common chronic disease of childhood and the estimate of the time children are absent from school due to oral pain and acute infection is over seven million hours a year in Colorado.
- Dental sealants—a plastic coating applied to the chewing surfaces of the back teeth—are a safe, effective way to prevent cavities among children.
- School-based programs are successful in reaching children of racial and ethnic minority groups who are most at-risk for oral disease.

Program

- The Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment's Oral Health Unit receives funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to build key oral health infrastructure, including development of a state plan and implementation of community prevention efforts.
- The Unit supports Be Smart & Seal Them! a school-based or school-linked dental sealant project reaching low-income second grade children in Colorado with dental sealants, fluoride varnish and preventive dental care and education.
- Community partners such as Denver Health, Eastern Plains, Southwest Smilemakers, and Eagle County are helping the Unit reach children most at risk for oral disease.

Impact

- Results over a single school-year of intervention across the state include:
 - Denver* - Over twelve hundred second grade students in thirty-six schools received dental screening; almost one thousand received sealants. Eight hundred third grade students received additional services.
 - Eastern Plains* - Students in kindergarten through second grade received dental screenings and fluoride varnish and about a third of the second graders received sealants. An oral health education session reached over four hundred students.
 - Southwest Smilemakers* - This program of the San Juan Basin Health Department provided dental care services to more than five hundred children in Southwest Colorado; about three-fourth of the children screened received dental treatment, sealants, fluoride treatment and other preventative care.
 - Eagle County* - More than two hundred children now have access to dental care; the University of Colorado Smilemakers van provided free screening to almost two hundred uninsured and underinsured children, as well as education, x-rays, fluoride varnish.

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