

NEW YORK ORAL HEALTH PLAN: A BLUEPRINT FOR ACTION

Oral health stakeholders now speak with one voice to policymakers

Public Health Problem

- A state oral health plan is a necessary and key component of public health infrastructure that identifies oral health problems and gaps in policy, prevention, access, workforce issues and surveillance and provides a common agenda for taking action.
- New York had no state oral health plan prior to 2001.

Program

- The New York State Department of Health, Bureau of Dental Health receives funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to build key oral health infrastructure, including development of a state plan.
- The Bureau partnered with the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy, an organization that promotes progressive health and education policies in areas that are traditionally overlooked, to form a steering committee of stakeholders to guide the development of a plan.
- Using a consensus building process facilitated by the Bureau and the *Framework for Comprehensive State Oral Health Plans*, the steering committee reviewed other state's plans, identified major issues and formed five work groups to address the key issues: policy, population-based prevention, access to care, workforce and surveillance and research.
- Ensuring both a local and a state level perspective for the plan relieved a potential barrier to action for a large, diverse state like New York. The workgroups identified critical dental public health issues in the state, defined goals, objectives and strategies for each issue, set targets for each objective and identified best and promising practices. The finished plan was widely disseminated and the plan development process was evaluated.

Impact

The oral health plan blueprint for action has resulted in these achievements:

- Formation of a statewide oral health coalition to guide action
- Inclusion of oral health indicators in the health department's overall Prevention Agenda, raising oral health issues to a higher level in the state's hierarchy of prevention measures
- Formation of a New York Dental Association task force to accomplish key objectives in the plan
- Adoption of important oral health recommendations by organizations such as Perinatal Networks, Area Health Education Centers, and Rural Health Networks
- Advocacy by a broader array of health organizations for needed legislative and policy changes to promote oral health

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