

Executive Summary

The 2017 Edition of the Tennessee State Oral Health Plan serves as Tennessee’s first statewide, comprehensive oral health plan. This plan supports the mission of the Tennessee Department of Health (TDH), “to protect, promote, and improve the health and prosperity of people in Tennessee”. The plan was formulated in accordance with Public Chapter 0968, which authorized the Tennessee Department of Health to develop a “comprehensive, state oral health plan”.¹

Tennessee Department of Health Mission

“Protect, Promote, and Improve the health and prosperity of people in Tennessee.”

Purpose of the State Oral Health Plan

The state oral health plan, in coordination with the State Health Plan, offers a blueprint for improving the health of people in Tennessee.² Both plans focus on the importance of “upstream” primary prevention, working to block disease before it begins, in an effort to ensure every Tennessean has the opportunity to achieve optimal health.

The Tennessee State Oral Health Plan frames the issues of dental disease while focusing on four areas to address oral health in Tennessee: **1) Monitoring Disease in Tennessee, 2) Oral Health Education & Advocacy, 3) Prevention, and 4) Oral Health Resources & Workforce.** These are the four overarching areas the oral health plan will address to improve the oral health of Tennesseans.

Key Recommendations

The plan outlines a series of recommendations to be carried out over the next five years with assistance from state, local, and community partners. These recommendations will serve as the

¹ For more information on Public Chapter 0968, see appendix A.

² For more information on the State Health Plan, visit <http://tn.gov/health/article/state-health-plan>.

first steps in the journey to protect and improve the overall health of people in the state and to guarantee oral health is included in efforts to address overall health and well-being.

Monitoring Dental Disease in Tennessee

- Recommendation 1: Develop a Tennessee oral health data source grid specific for the state
- Recommendation 2: Caries Risk Assessment on all patients
- Recommendation 3: Research best practices for a surveillance system
- Recommendation 4: Develop TDH surveillance system to monitor the Tennessee Cancer Registry and craniofacial health in Tennessee

Oral Health Education and Advocacy

- Recommendation 1: Raise dental provider awareness of their role in substance abuse prevention
- Recommendation 2: Work with existing tobacco prevention programs for public awareness of the effects of tobacco in the oral cavity
- Recommendation 3: Work with community partners to increase public awareness of the impact of diet and sugary drinks on oral health
- Recommendation 4: Work with existing chronic disease prevention programs to develop messaging and an educational course for healthcare providers
- Recommendation 5: Highlight integrated care models, specifically the Meharry Interprofessional Collaboration Model

Prevention

- Recommendation 1: Organize state-wide information and support meeting with community stakeholders to raise awareness of the benefits of community water fluoridation
- Recommendation 2: Encourage greater use of sealants by dental providers in order to prevent pit and fissure caries in permanent molar teeth of children
- Recommendation 3: Advocate for the usage of Silver Diamine Fluoride and provide education on its effectiveness as a preventative measure, specifically utilizing the University of Tennessee Health Science Center Silver Diamine Fluoride model
- Recommendation 4: Expand efforts to adopt the *Tooth Wisdom Get Smart About Your Mouth Workshops* for the elderly population

- Recommendation 5: Advocate the “lift the lip” and fluoride varnish campaigns for medical providers

Oral Health Resources and Workforce

- Recommendation 1: Map existing providers/activity/services of oral health efforts for public and provider use
- Recommendation 2: Actively seek funding for TDH dental clinics in order to expand the targeted population to include uninsured adults and partner with Safety Net Clinics to expand their oral health reach
- Recommendation 3: Request TDH, Health Related Boards collect information on practicing status of dentist and hygienist during licensure and license renewal
- Recommendation 4: Raise awareness of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention *Summary of Infection Prevention Practices in Dental Setting*
- Recommendation 5: Raise awareness of the American Dental Association Center for Evidence-Based Dentistry Guidelines