

## ***“Dental Care is a Family Affair”***



When assessing the status of children's dental health in Pennsylvania, PCOH has determined key areas where there are opportunities for improvement. The coalition is utilizing the following initiatives to improve the overall oral health of our youngest residents.

### **The facts....**

- ☞ 80% of the dental disease in children occurs in the lowest-income families<sup>1</sup>
- ☞ Of the more than 1 million children enrolled in PA Medicaid, fewer than half had a dental visit in 2018<sup>2</sup>
- ☞ Dental visits are recommended to begin at the first birthday; for the children enrolled in PA Medicaid, 8 out of 10 did not see a dentist until age three or later<sup>2</sup>
- ☞ Children whose caregivers regularly visit the dentist are 5-13 times more likely to receive dental care themselves<sup>3,4</sup>



### **The work currently underway...**

- ☞ Conduct a Basic Screening Survey (BSS) of third graders in the 2020-21 academic year to assess the percentage of children in the state who have experienced dental disease in the state
- ☞ Investigate the current School-Based Health Centers (SBHCs) to determine the total number of centers and services provided across the state
- ☞ Oversample schools that have a Dental Hygiene Services Program to determine if there is less disease and/or more treated disease in districts that employ a Certified School Dental Hygienist as opposed to those that do not
- ☞ Propose a dental insurance stand-alone option for the PA CHIP program that will allow families who have medical benefits through their employer to purchase dental insurance

### **Our recommended next steps...**

- ☞ Increase the number of dental providers willing to treat children with special needs
- ☞ Include oral health information in the K-12 Health And Physical Education Standards<sup>5</sup>
- ☞ Extend the Medicaid coverage for pregnant women to one year post-partum (currently 6 weeks) to allow continuous care for new mothers until the time their child is due for their first dental visit
- ☞ Revise the mandated dental screening program to track more data and educate parents about the need to still have a dental visit



*For more information or to learn how to get involved, please contact  
PA Coalition for Oral Health at (724)972-7242 or [info@paoralhealth.org](mailto:info@paoralhealth.org)*

### **References**

- <sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Trends in Oral Health Status – United States 1988-1994 and 1999-2004. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2005; 54:1-44.
- <sup>2</sup> Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, (2019). *CMS-416 Report: Pennsylvania 2018 data set* [Data set]. Retrieved from <https://www.medicare.gov/medicaid/benefits/early-and-periodic-screening-diagnostic-and-treatment/index.html>
- <sup>3</sup> *Journal of the American Dental Association*. 2007 Mar;138(3):309-18; quiz 395-396, 398
- <sup>4</sup> Bonito & Gooch, "Modeling the Oral Health Needs of 12-13 Year Olds in the Baltimore MSA: Results from One ICS-II Study Site," American Public Health Association Annual Meeting, 1992
- <sup>5</sup> PA Department of Education, (2002). Academic Standards for Health, Safety and Physical Education. Retrieved February 12, 2019, from <https://www.stateboard.education.pa.gov/Documents/Regulations and Statements/State Academic Standards/SandyHealth.pdf>