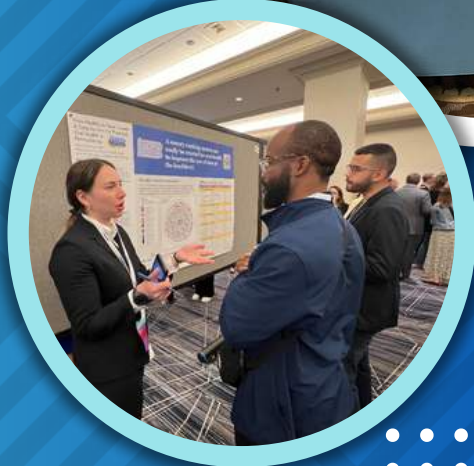


2024 IMPACT REPORT



A Message from Our Board Chair

In 2024, PCOH was named a Highmark Bright Blue Futures Rising Star as an extraordinary nonprofit group advancing health equity in Pennsylvania. This award recognizes the many PCOH accomplishments related to our mission to improve oral health for all Pennsylvanians by uniting stakeholders to advance advocacy, policy, education, and innovative approaches.

Through collaboration with partner organizations, PCOH led five work groups supporting family oral health, Medicaid adult dental benefits, oral health workforce, school sealant programs, and community water fluoridation in Pennsylvania. The last two topics represent key oral health prevention measures, with continued growth in the number of children participating in school sealant programs in 90 schools in the 2023-2024 academic year. In addition, in 2024, PCOH attended water operator association conferences, housed the Fluoridation Learning Online course in the PCOH course portal through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and partnered with Penn Dental Medicine to celebrate 70 years of water fluoridation in Philadelphia. These activities position PCOH as a dynamic voice leading change in oral health in Pennsylvania.

We all know challenging times lie ahead in 2025. As an eternal optimist, I see the future of PCOH as bright blue because of the many talented staff, board members, and stakeholders who persist in advocating for optimum oral health for everyone in Pennsylvania. PCOH is a rising star among oral health nonprofit organizations and it has been my privilege to serve as Board Chair in 2024.

Joan Gluch, PhD, RDH, PHDHP
2024 PCOH Board Chair



2024 Board of Directors & Staff

Board of Directors

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Nicole Payonk

Policy & Advocacy Coordinator

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Program & Evaluation Coordinator

Alison Feise

Data & Evaluation Associate



About PCOH

Mission

To improve oral health for all Pennsylvanians by uniting stakeholders to advance advocacy, policy, education, and innovative approaches.

Vision

Essential to overall health and wellness, optimal oral health benefits all Pennsylvanians. By bringing together oral health advocates and professionals to share the best and most innovative approaches, PCOH serves as the dynamic leading voice to improve oral health across the commonwealth.

Priorities

Advancing and advocating for oral health policy and infrastructure across all systems

Improving oral health for Pennsylvania's most vulnerable populations

Supporting Pennsylvania oral workforce development

Advocating for community water fluoridation

2024
total revenue

\$919,000

80%

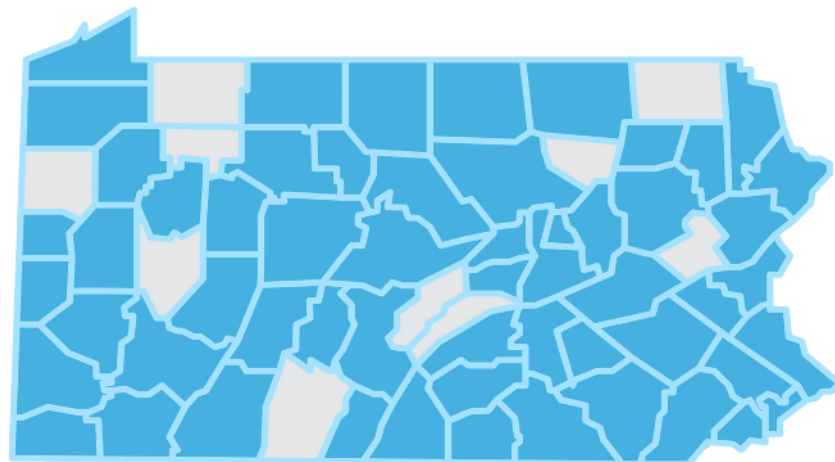
of funds were used for
direct programming

1,100

PCOH stakeholders

57

PA counties with at least
one PCOH stakeholder



Financial Partners

Visionary Partners (\$50,000+)

CareQuest Institute for Oral Health
McElhattan Foundation

Distinguished Partners (\$10,000 - \$49,999)

Delta Dental
Highmark Foundation
Partnership for Better Health
Special Smiles, Ltd.
UPMC Health Plan

Leading Partners (\$5,000- \$9,999)

Aetna Better Health Kids
Avēsis
Geisinger Health Plan
Highmark Wholecare
Pediatric Dental Associates and Children's Dental Management
Smiles 4 Keeps
United Concordia Dental

Connecting Partners (\$2,500 - \$4,999)

DentaQuest
Jefferson Health Plans
SKYGEN
United Healthcare Community Plan of PA

Partners (\$1,000 - \$2,499)

American Fluoridation Society
AmeriHealth Caritas Pennsylvania and Keystone First
Miracle Dental Associates
Pennsylvania Dental Hygienists' Association
Walmart Foundation

Supporters

*Alberta Landis
Alison Feise
Amanda Kundrod
Amy Requa
Amy Pesci, RDH, BSDH, MS, PHDHP
Angie Yorina
Anonymous (6)
Dr. Bernie Dishler
Bernie Logan
Cheryl Janssen
Christine Bennett
Dr. Cynthia Olenwine
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Richard Berkman, Esq.
Sandra Thompson, DMD
Dr. Thomas J. Maroon
UPMC Cole Pediatrics*

Thank you for your support!

Your support means so much to us and we are profoundly grateful to have you by our side. Names appear as requested. Although we do our best to ensure our donor lists are error-free, we occasionally mess up. Please accept our heartfelt apology for any mistakes that might occur in our computer system. Thank you again, not only for your gift, but your understanding.

Our Accomplishments

Improving Oral Health for PA's Most Vulnerable Populations

Adult dental Medicaid workgroup met monthly to protect current adult dental benefits and advocate for legislation to increase coverage

Awarded two mini grants, totaling \$8,000, to support work across the state that advances the priorities of the 2020-2030 PA Oral Health Plan

Worked with each of the state's managed care organizations to improve benefits for adult dental under Medicaid

Served on diverse teams to enhance dental care access for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including advocacy for the EMUP initiative which would increase access to funding in this space

Hosted an informative training in Schuylkill County to educate local advocates on the oral health status of the region

Managed the school sealant program for the Oral Health Program, resulting in 1,491 children receiving dental sealants in 90 schools

Collected data on the free and charitable oral health care that took place in 2023 which include care provided to 10,000+ individuals and services totaling over \$5.6 million

Met with legislators to support and promote House Bill 1417 & Senate Bill 955: Restoring Dental Coverage for Medical Assistance Recipients, introduced in 2023

Created and disseminated resources for providers and enrollees to better understand what dental services are covered under Medicaid

Provided oral health representation on many groups and committees, including the Coalition for the Commonwealth, PA Cancer Coalition/HPV Workgroup, PA Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System, Thriving PA Children's Initiative, State Health Assessment, and State Health Improvement Plan

Participated in the Arc's Disability Health Action Network and promoted improved access to dental care for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities



97% of Medicaid members are enrolled in a managed care organization (MCO) A New Look on Enrollment as a Medicaid Provider

Expand access to care by:

- Serving a broader population base
- Promoting well-being for all members of your community

FINANCIAL IMPACT

No added cost to process payments

Diversify secured reimbursement

Credentialing times improved

Average wait times are currently **53 days** for a child with Medicaid to get a dental appointment

\$12 million+ added to select dental fees for 2025

190 dental codes covered on the state fee schedule

Flexible fee schedules for each MCO

MEDICAID MYTHS

MYTH: I have to accept everyone with that insurance if I sign up.

FACT: You may choose how many patients to add under a particular insurance.

MYTH: I can't make a difference just by seeing a few patients.

FACT: You can set a 3-5% Medicaid ratio and help a lot of people.

MYTH: I can't afford all the no-shows.

FACT: You can dismiss a patient if needed.

MYTH: I don't want to sign up for all of the health plans. It's too much paperwork.

FACT: You can participate in one MCO or up to all 5 in a region.

MYTH: It's harder to sign up for Medicaid compared to private insurance plans.

FACT: Most MCOs have live reps that can help you.

MYTH: I can't afford to take the low fees.

FACT: You can negotiate your own fee schedule with each MCO.

Learn more about how you can help people in your community

Enroll Now!



Our Accomplishments

Advancing and Advocating for Oral Health Policy and Infrastructure Across All Systems

Continued to advocate for school districts in Pennsylvania to increase the number of dental hygiene services programs and for those districts to bill Medicaid directly for dental care

Participated in dozens of conversations with leadership at the PA Department of Health and the PA Department of Human Services to improve dental care access and expand workforce

Clarified the role of dental providers and mandated school dental screenings with the acceptance of Act 55 of 2023

Started work on a new project researching the possible expansion of school dental services and Medicaid billing, including working directly with school nurses

PCOH was quoted in or contributed to 30 news articles about oral health advocacy across the commonwealth

Worked with the American Dental Association (ADA) to create a blueprint to improve provider participation in Medicaid to effectively increase utilization of dental services for children and adults through a 6-state pilot program

Attended the National Network for Oral Health Access (NNOHA) conference for the first time to learn more about the unique issues faced by community health centers and how we can better serve them

Act 55: Understanding the Role of Dental Providers and Mandated School Dental Screenings

Program Type	Provider Type	Permitted Services
Dental Hygiene Services Program (DHSP)	Certified School Dental Hygienist (CSDH)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clinical services Classroom education Mandated screenings/sign forms
Mandated Dental Program (MDP)	Public Health Dental Hygiene Practitioner (PHDHP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mandated screenings/sign forms

Act 55 of 2023 Updates:

- The Public School Code is amended from dental "examinations" to "screenings".
- PHDHPs can complete mandated dental screenings and sign form in schools that **DO NOT** have a DHSP.
- All school districts are required to identify a "dentist of record"; districts with an MDP can utilize a PHDHP to complete the screenings and sign the forms.

	School	Dental Office	FQHC or RHC	Medical Office
Dentist	✓	✓	✓	✓
CSDH	✓	✗	✗	✗
PHDHP	✓*	✓	✓	✓
RDH/EFDA	✗	✗	✗	✗

*Not eligible to perform mandated screenings and sign forms in schools that employ a CSDH/have a DHSP.

For more information visit the Pennsylvania Department of Health, Division of School Health Dental Health Program [website](#).



Our Accomplishments

Supporting PA Oral Workforce Development

Continued the second year of a four-year dental career pipeline project utilizing *Dying from Dirty Teeth* by Angie Stone to educate students on the disparaging condition of oral health care for older adults and spark interest in dental public health careers, which was completed by over 400 dental and dental hygiene students at 11 schools

Reached over 1,200 high school students in career pathway programs through presentations and events sponsored by regional Area Health Education Centers and local schools

Launched registration for the inaugural Dental Assistant Radiology Training (DART) series to help dental assistants better prepare for the RHS Exam

Provided continued support and participation for a wide range of county and regional oral health task forces across the state, including the Perry County Health Coalition and SUN Smiles

Exhibited and presented a poster at the Third Annual Community Health Worker Conference to promote oral health education and share resources

Exhibited at the University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine Career Fair for a second time to educate graduating dental students on the career opportunities available in public health

Added an additional community health worker continuing education course on the website

Staff and volunteers participated in several career days at high schools and community colleges across the state to educate students on dental career opportunities

Exhibited at the Northeast Pennsylvania Area Health Education Center's Healthcare Career Exploration Event that was attended by over 450 students from Northeast PA interested in healthcare careers

Attended the PA School Counselors Association Annual Conference to disseminate dental career resources to school counselors across the state

Awarded an Appalachian Regional Initiative for Stronger Economies (ARISE) award for a collaborative project to start in 2025, "Expanding the Oral Health Workforce and Access to Care for the Appalachian Region"



Our support comes from federal and state grants, corporate sponsorships, individual and organizational donors, and private foundations. Our total revenue fluctuates each year due to special projects. As a public charity, the PA Coalition for Oral Health takes its obligation to operate in the public view and the public interest very seriously. Accordingly, we make available our federal tax return and our audited financial statements. Our IRS Form 990 may be viewed at www.paoralhealth.org and www.candid.org, and financial statements may be requested at info@paoralhealth.org.

Our Accomplishments

Advocating for Community Water Fluoridation (CWF)

Organized community water fluoridation advocacy efforts and addressed fluoridation rollbacks in Tioga and Clearfield counties

Continued to collaborate with state officials and public health specialists to ensure public information about fluoridated water systems is as accurate as possible

Continually updated the PCOH [fluoridation status map](#) of Pennsylvania in partnership with the Pittsburgh Water Collaboratory

Led and coordinated communications for members of the statewide CWF Task Force

Continued the Water Operator Thank You Campaign to organize public outreach efforts and show gratitude to water operators across the state providing communities with safe drinking water

Updated logo and outreach materials for the Statewide Water Action Team (SWAT) to encourage early notification of fluoridation rollbacks

Manually updated 1,800+ community water systems in the CDC Water Fluoridation Reporting System (WFRS)

Launched the Fluoridation Learning Online (FLO) course on the PCOH course portal, a fluoridation training through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Assisted the PA Department of Health in presenting fluoridation awards on behalf of the American Dental Association, the Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Created and distributed "Let's Talk About Water Fluoridation" in response to fluoride misinformation in the news

Funding for this project is through the Pennsylvania Department of Health through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) under Grant NU58DP007897: Promoting Strategies to Advance Oral Health in Pennsylvania. This information or content and conclusions are those of the author and should not be construed as the official position or policy of, nor should any endorsements be inferred by CDC, HHS or the U.S. Government.



Let's Talk About Water Fluoridation...

PA Coalition for Oral Health supports water fluoridation as the single most effective public health measure to prevent tooth decay. Since its introduction nearly 80 years ago, adjusting the naturally-occurring levels of fluoride to the recommended Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) level has dramatically improved the oral health of tens of millions of Americans. In Pennsylvania, the decision of adjusting the level of fluoride in water supplies is up to individual communities.

What You Might Hear

- "Adding fluoride to water is like forcing people to take medication."
- "Studies show that fluoride is linked to lower IQ scores in children and can cause cancer."
- "Fluoridation is a 'freedom of choice' issue."
- "Other countries don't adjust fluoride in their water and are doing fine."
- "We already get fluoride from toothpaste and too much is dangerous."
- "The federal government may ban fluoride in water."

What You Should Know

- Fluoride is a natural mineral. It is not a medication. Water with added fluoride is similar to adding iodine to salt, vitamin D to milk, calcium to orange juice, and folic acid to bread.
- Thousands of scientific studies and nearly 80 years of experience prove fluoridation is safe and effective. The amount of fluoride used in America's water is safe and regulated and doesn't lead to bad side effects. Studies around lowered IQ did not show fluoride as a cause and examined fluoride at levels more than twice the limits used in water in the United States.
- Fluoride exists naturally in water, so it isn't a question of choosing. It's about making sure people receive the right amount. Public health decisions are made based on what benefits the entire community. Individuals can use filters to remove fluoride from tap water if that's what they want to do.
- Other countries that may not fluoridate their water offer fluoride in other products like milk and salt. They also provide free and accessible dental care and nutritious meals which means they have fewer cavities. Removing fluoride needs to come with other plans to make sure everyone has good oral health, including a dentist that they can afford to see regularly, and healthy, affordable food options.
- Too much of anything can be unsafe. Fluoride levels in water and toothpaste are carefully monitored and regulated - they take different approaches to oral health. Much like using seatbelts and airbags, they work together to keep us healthy.
- In Pennsylvania, each public water system makes its own decision on whether or not they will adjust the natural level of fluoride in the water they provide to their customers. Recent court decisions you may have heard about in the news were based on fluoride levels much higher than what is used in drinking water.



Other Successes

Recognized by the Highmark Foundation as a Bright Blue Futures Awardee, an award that recognizes extraordinary nonprofits that are advancing health equity

Exhibited and/or presented at 67 events, reaching nearly 6,000 people with oral health education

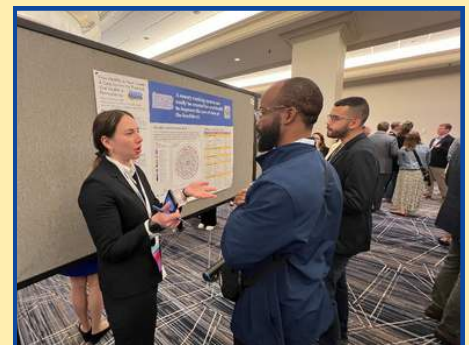
Continued to support the PA Department of Health in facilitating the [Pennsylvania Oral Health Plan 2020-2030](#) and the Oral Health Plan Advisory Group

Continued support and leadership for the PA Family Oral Health Collective workgroup

Hosted two webinar updates in [June](#) and [December](#) for stakeholders and individuals interested in learning more about PCOH

[Developed a "Finding Dental Care" webpage for community partners to identify social services, clinics, and other programs in the community where an individual might seek dental care](#)

Staff attended and presented at the National Oral Health Conference in St. Louis, Missouri in April



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Improving Oral Health in Pennsylvania (IOH-PA) 2018-2024

The PA Department of Health Oral Health Program received funding from CDC (2018-2024) and HRSA (2022-2026) grants totaling \$3.62 million. PCOH is a key partner in these grants and works on numerous projects as a result of this partnership. Pennsylvania was also awarded the 2024-2027 round of funding from the CDC in late 2024.

Major Partner: PA Department of Health Oral Health Program

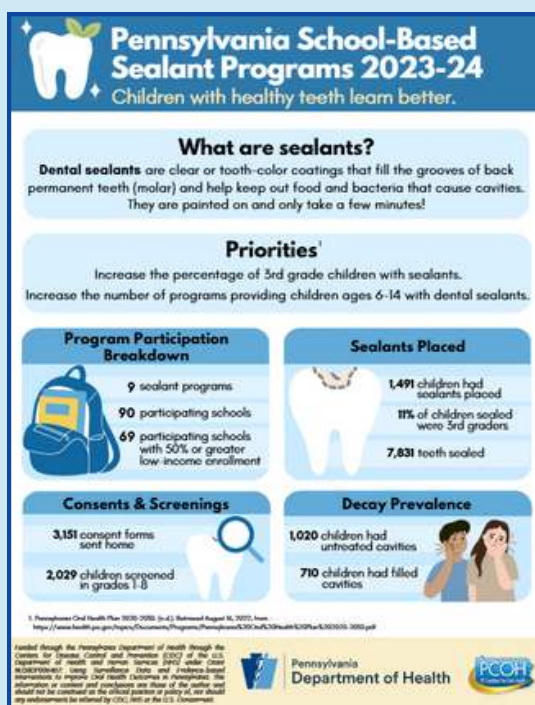
Partners: PA Coalition for Oral Health, PA Association of Community Health Centers, and Heartland Grant Solutions

Supported school sealant programs (SSPs) in providing 7,831 sealants to 1,491 students in 90 schools

Awarded over \$36,000 in grants to update fluoridation equipment in 2 community water systems covering Allegheny, Indiana, and Westmoreland counties

Guaranteed continued fluoridation for over 31,000 Pennsylvanians served by community water systems

Attended and exhibited at 3 statewide water conferences and educated water system employees and decision-makers about community water fluoridation



5,854 views of the fluoridation map

2,067 visits to the fluoride resource page

Funding for this project is through the Pennsylvania Department of Health through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) under Grant NU58DP007897: Promoting Strategies to Advance Oral Health in Pennsylvania. This information or content and conclusions are those of the author and should not be construed as the official position or policy of, nor should any endorsements be inferred by CDC, HHS or the U.S. Government.

Innovative Programs to Address Oral Health Workforce Needs 2022-2026

Major Partner: PA Department of Health Oral Health Program

Partners: PA Coalition for Oral Health, Dental Public Health Consultant, PA Chapter of American Academy of Pediatrics, Heartland Grant Solutions, PA Office of Rural Health, PA Association of Community Health Centers, and PA Area Health Education Center

Advocated for tracking and analysis of dental licensure data by the PA Department of Health Oral Health Program

Continued our dental workforce pipeline program to reach high school students in underserved areas to encourage the consideration of dental careers

Administered a survey of certified community health workers in PA to gauge oral health information being provided and gaps in oral health education

Continued a "hot topic" workforce webinar series with the first two webinars focusing on licensure compact models and funding dental careers

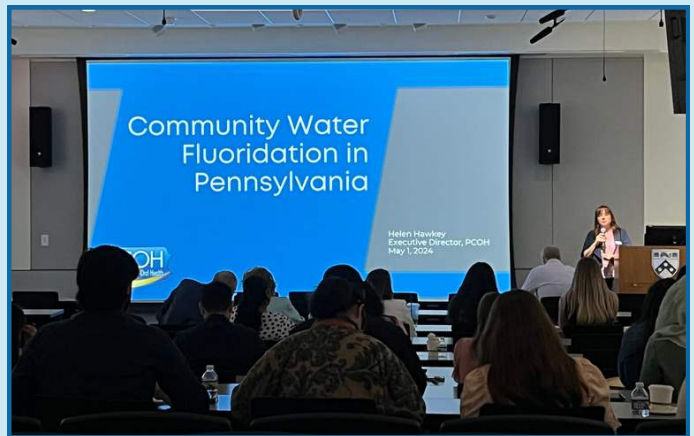


Funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Health through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) under Grant T1246099: Grants to States to Support Oral Health Workforce Activities. This information or content and conclusions are those of the author and should not be construed as the official position or policy of, nor should any endorsements be inferred by HRSA, HHS or the U.S. Government.

Event Spotlight

A Celebration of 70 Years of Smiles in Philadelphia

PCOH and the University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine gathered 50 individuals to celebrate 70 years of water fluoridation in Philadelphia. This event featured a tour of a Philadelphia water treatment plant, a continuing education training, a lunch and awards ceremony, and an educational forum on the importance of safe drinking water.



This event was supported by the American Fluoridation Society, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, Water Center at Penn, Pennsylvania Dental Association, the Philadelphia Water Department, the Pennsylvania Department of Health, and United Concordia Dental.

Communications Spotlight

Website Revamp

This spring, PCOH launched an upgraded website! With a fresh look and some cool new features, our website has become the ultimate resource for users. The site now includes our latest social media posts and stakeholder spotlight features as well as a brand new Finding Dental Care page.

19,587 unique visits to the website

4,299 printed resources mailed out

2,629 educational oral health resources downloaded

11 free continuing education courses offered

14 new/updated PCOH resources added

The screenshot displays a grid of resource cards on the PCOH website. Each card includes a title, a brief description, and a 'Learn more' button. The resources listed are:

- Federally Qualified Health Centers:** Federally qualified health centers (FQHC) are primary care facilities in rural and urban areas. There are more than 120 FQHC sites in PA that provide dental care. All insurances are accepted. Fees are based on what the patient can pay and are often based on income level and family size.
- Free and Charitable Clinics:** Free and charitable clinics are people who are uninsured, need services not covered by insurance (underinsured), or have limited or no access to care. There are nearly 20 free clinics in PA that offer dental services.
- Donated Dental Services:** Dentists volunteer to provide comprehensive treatment to eligible patients. Applicants must have no income to afford dental care and must meet ONE of the following criteria: over 65 years of age; permanently disabled; or need medically necessary dental care. For more information and to apply, click the button below.
- Dental Schools and Dental Hygiene Program Clinics:** There are four dental programs and 13 dental hygiene programs in Pennsylvania which provide dental services at a low or reduced cost to anyone. To locate a dental school or dental hygiene program clinic, click the button below.
- PA Navigate:** PA Navigate is an online tool that connects individuals to community-based organizations, county and state agencies, and healthcare providers. Both individuals and providers can use PA Navigate to make referrals for healthcare services. Dental care resources are located under the "Health" section. It also includes resources to address food, shelter, transportation, and more.
- Managed Care Organizations (Medicaid Health Plans):** Managed care organizations can connect their members with dental providers in their regions. For the member services phone numbers for each managed care organization, click the "Managed care providers" button below. For provider lists by health plan, click the "Providers by health plan" button below.
- Dental Coverage through the Pennie Marketplace:** Pennie, Pennsylvania's insurance marketplace, offers two ways to get dental coverage outside of employer coverage. Dental coverage can be added to medical insurance, or purchased separately as just a dental plan.
- PA Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP):** PA Medicaid and CHIP offer free or low-cost health insurance options for individuals up to age 19. For more information and to locate a provider in your area, click the button below.
- PA 211:** PA 211 is a service provided through the United Way of Pennsylvania to provide information and referrals to health, human services, and other social assistance programs.
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs:** The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has a searchable map on their website for Veterans to use their address to find healthcare options (including dental care) nearby.
- School-Based Health Centers:** School-based health centers provide a range of health services including physical, dental, and behavioral health care for students and parents in the school setting. Available services vary between centers.
- PA Dental Association (PDA):** PDA is the statewide dental professional organization for dentists. PDA has an online directory to help individuals find dental care.
- Rural Health Clinics:** Rural health clinics are focused on providing primary care services in non-urbanized areas. Availability of dental services will vary by location.

www.paoralhealth.org

Upcoming Projects

2025

Collect data for the seventh year of our charitable work tracking for free dental services

Convene statewide stakeholders in Harrisburg for the two-day 2025 PA Oral Health Summit

Continue to implement the goals and action plans of the Pennsylvania Oral Health Plan 2020-2030

Offer dental continuing education credits in tobacco/nicotine cessation, HPV prevention, serving people with disabilities, community water fluoridation, and more

Maintain the percentage of Pennsylvanians who have access to optimally fluoridated drinking water by investigating new partnerships that promote drinking tap water and healthier beverage choices by all residents

Award additional community water fluoridation grants to water systems to initiate or update their fluoridation practices

Add additional school sealant programs (SSPs)

Continue to offer free resources to oral health advocates and providers on the PCOH website, "Request Materials" page

Promote the development of dental assisting careers across the commonwealth by reviewing and revising current pathways

Host an informational webinar to educate stakeholders on promoting dental careers to high school students

Collaborate with partners on an upcoming dental assisting project, "Expanding the Oral Health Workforce and Access to Care for the Appalachian Region"

Partner with water systems that fluoridate to collect data to include in the Water Fluoridation Reporting System (WFRS)

Collaborate with the Pennsylvania Department of Health to prepare a new statewide oral health surveillance plan

Continue to motivate legislators to reintroduce and support legislation that would increase access to oral health care for Pennsylvanians

Visit paoralhealth.org to find out more
or to get involved!

