Closing the Gap on Oral Health Inequities: Lessons for School-Based Implementation

June 2023

Agenda

- Setting the Stage: Oral Health = Overall Health
- Introduction to Bright Smiles, Bright Futures (BSBF)
- Social Determinants of Health + Health Equity
- Sustainable Development Goals
- Pilot Project
  - Introduction + Background
  - Key Learnings
- Future Opportunities
- Questions and Discussion

POP QUIZ!

What is the most common chronic disease worldwide?

1. Heart Disease
2. Arthritis
3. Caries
4. Diabetes

The most common disease in the world is right under our nose — cavities.
Oral Health has been overlooked for too long in the global health agenda. Fourteen years after the last consideration of oral health by EB60 (2007), today’s resolution provides a welcome opportunity to address the public health challenges posed by the burden of oral diseases to reposition oral health as part of the global health agenda in the context of UHC.

Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus | WHO Director-General
Closing remarks Committee A | World Health Assembly
27 May 2021 | Geneva

Oral Health is Overall Health

Oral disease can increase the risk of other health conditions

- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Adverse pregnancy outcomes
- Diabetes
- Dementia
- Respiratory diseases
- Strokes
- Heart attacks
- Alzheimer’s

Oral Health in America

Dr. David Satcher
16th Surgeon General of the United States

“Oral Health is Essential for Overall Health”

2021

2000
"The status of global oral health is alarming and requires urgent action by all stakeholders."

WHO Global Oral Health Status Report
Launched on November 18, 2022 in Geneva

2021 WHO Resolution for Oral Health

Priorities:
- Linking Oral and Systemic Health
  - Implement a Health in All Policies approach for oral health promotion and disease prevention.
  - Implement within the context of the social determinants of health and equity.
- From Chair side to community-wide
  - Shift from the traditional curative approach of dentistry towards a preventive approach
  - Oral health promotion and disease prevention in schools, workplaces and communities.
  - Inclusive care within the primary health care system
  - Engage communities in the planning, implementation and monitoring of oral health programs and oral health care services.

GLOBAL MOMENTUM

CURATIVE/CHAIRSIDE
COMMUNITY
(schools, workplaces, etc.)

PUBLIC HEALTH

TRANSITION

TOP 5
things you need to know about Bright Smiles, Bright Futures

Owned & operated by Colgate - +30 Years running
Operated in over 100 Countries - 1.68BN children & families reached
Partnerships Connecting locally with communities & consumers - +2000
Colgate Bright Smiles, Bright Futures®

Introduced in 1991, Colgate Bright Smiles, Bright Futures® is a far-reaching, impactful oral health education initiative with the goal of improving oral health of children around the world.

- CP’s flagship corporate responsibility initiative
- In over 100 countries
- Translated in 35+ languages
- Reached over 1.6 billion children & families worldwide (since 1991)
- Partnerships with government, health professions, NGOs and the community

Colgate Bright Smiles, Bright Futures®

- Provide education, free oral health screenings, and treatment referrals for children up to 12 years old
- ‘Talking Walls’ and Teacher Education are a core component to integrate oral health education in the classroom
- In South Africa, Phelophepa Trains (“Trains of Hope”) visit rural areas with underserved populations, staffed by all health professionals on the train

What is Health?

Definition of Health:
Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

MISSION:
Above all, empower kids to be the champions of optimism, spark the courage to smile and take positive action.
Good Oral Health is More Than Health Care and Hygiene

What determines how healthy we can be and how long we may live?

“Why do we keep treating people for illnesses only to send them back to the conditions that created illness in the first place?”


Addressing Children’s Wellbeing Requires a Broader Approach

Why BSBF is Important

Underserved children and their families bear the burden of oral health diseases and poor oral health outcomes.
Social Impact - Policy-Centered and Upstream

**Equality**  
**Equity**  
**Empowerment**

The Power of BSBF!

Public Policy Alignment

**BSBF + The UN Sustainable Development Goals**

The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve **health and education**, reduce **inequality**, and spur economic growth.

The SDGs are **grounded in health equity**.

Most relevant goals for oral health
Who We Are

- Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC)
- Currently located in the Flathead City-County Health Department Building
- The Health Clinic was established by the Health Department and volunteers in 2003 and became a FQHC in 2007
- Health Center separated from the Health Department on June 1, 2021
- Is now an independent, 501 (c 3) non-profit entity under the name Greater Valley Health Center
- Partnering with community agencies to provide needed services focusing on the underserved

What is a Health Center?

- Deliver high quality, culturally competent, comprehensive primary care. Including:
  - Medical
  - Dental
  - Behavioral health
- Provide services regardless of patients' ability to pay and charge for services on a sliding fee scale.
- Develop systems of patient-centered and integrated care that respond to the unique needs of diverse medically underserved areas and populations.
- Meet government requirements regarding administrative, clinical, and financial operations.

School-Based Services

Seven locations in Kalispell and Evergreen school districts

Medical

- Wellness, prevention, immunizations, sports physicals
- COVID, flu, strep, mono, STI testing
- First aid
- Prescriptions
- Health education
- Oral health
- Care management services to connect families with community services
- Referrals to services not provided at the school clinic

Behavioral Health

- Screening, assessment and counseling/treatment
- Individual and group outpatient therapies
- PTSD/trauma, depression, anxiety, addiction, relationships, etc.
Why did we choose oral health as a focus?

"The student and family did not have secure housing, transportation was problematic, food insecurity was an issue, and the student had limited school experiences. After several weeks of severe emotional dysregulation, a school staff person noticed that the student had several mouth sores. Consent was obtained for an initial visit to the Evergreen Cares Clinic, and the student was examined. This appointment led to eventual oral surgery to address the student’s need for care due to severe oral health issues and chronic pain.

Many changes have happened in this student’s life to support the child becoming a successful student. The primary issue of addressing health was unlikely to have been addressed if the Evergreen Cares Clinic was not in place. A partnership developed with the family that included support with follow-up and facilitating essential care.”

Mary Meehan
Evergreen School District Special Services Director

Pilot Project with BSBF

- Launched with 6 first grade classes at 2 schools in Kalispell, Montana
- Adventures in the Molar System - 6 week curriculum
- Taught by RN and Dental Hygienist
- Pre and Post Tests demonstrated a significant increase in knowledge
- Student favorites were the hard boiled egg experiment and learning to floss
- Many students did not have access to oral health care supplies
- Toothbrushes, Toothpaste and Floss were provided to all students
- Dental Exams were provided by our dental director and a dental assistant
- Program was rolled out to 3 additional schools
- 300 students participated in the first year
Program Overview

- Based on Common Core Standards
- Key Messages: Brushing, Flossing, Limiting sugary snacks and drinks, Visiting a dentist
- Video, Storybook and Hands on Activities
- Lessons clearly described in teacher’s guide
- We made adaptations and recommendations based on experiences with students during the pilot
- Addition of Dental Exams with “Opt Out” from Guardians
- Built relationships with students, families, teachers, and school administrators
- Our School-Based Clinics are not located in the schools where we implemented the oral health program - an opportunity for partners to learn about our integrated services

Results and Key Learnings

Sustainability
- Identified program champions at each school - school nurse or teacher
- Adding Evergreen School District and passing the baton to our school champions to continue the program with support on several lessons

Inclusivity
- Adapted curriculum to include Special Education programs
- Presenting curriculum to Middle School differently abled students in the fall

Dental Care + Continuity of Care
- Insured follow-up on significant dental findings with school nurses

Program Materials

- Storybook: Bright Smiles, White Teeth: The Story of Brushing + Flossing
- Tips and Tricks Guide
- Information/equipment for teachers
- Family Take Home Brochure
- Videos (with Spanish)

Opportunities

Request a Classroom Kit

Available starting January 2024

Continuing Professional Development for Nurses
Opportunities

Download + learn more at ColgateBSBF.com

Watch “Adventures in the Molar System”

Also available online:
- Van Visit Requests
- Free Downloads (incl. Teacher’s Guide)
- Head Start and Early Head Start materials

Questions and Discussion

Thank You!