

## **The evolution of a state-based dental sealant program in Oregon within the context of the state health transformation process**

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**TOPIC/TARGET AUDIENCE:** Public health professionals affected by transformation

**ABSTRACT:** The 2007 Smile Survey of Oregon's first, second, and third graders revealed that in every major measurement, children's oral health had worsened since the last Oregon Smile Survey in 2002. There were more cavities, more cavities in permanent teeth, and a 49% increase in untreated cavities. There are two measures that improve oral health in a community - community water fluoridation and school dental sealant programs. In 2007, only 23% of Oregon's public water systems were optimally fluoridated and only three of Oregon's 36 counties had sealant programs. In response to the 2007 Smile Survey, the Oregon legislature tasked the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to increase the number of schools served by sealant programs. The OHA began to provide clinical services and trained local programs to provide services. In 2014, dental care became incorporated into the services provided by the Coordinated Care Organizations. One incentivized dental metric was chosen - the provision of sealants for children 6 to 14 years old. This metric galvanized interest in serving schools. A certification requirement ensured quality sealants were provided appropriately within the school setting. Oregon now has 20 certified sealant programs serving 86% of the eligible schools in all 36 of Oregon's 36 counties.

### **OBJECTIVE(S):**

- Learn to be flexible within an ever-changing system of care
- Learn to leverage change to improve and expand services

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