



FLORIDA'S ACTION for **DENTAL HEALTH**

Florida's Action for Dental Health is a comprehensive effort developed by the Florida Dental Association to improve the oral health and resulting overall health of all Floridians.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Florida Dental Association (FDA) launched Florida's Action for Dental Health in conjunction with the American Dental Association. The FDA promotes and advocates for oral health because a healthy mouth is essential to a healthy body. All Floridians should have access to quality dental care with programs and services tailored to Florida's unique demographics — from infants to the elderly. The FDA partnered with stakeholder groups to develop Florida's Action for Dental Health objectives and strategies designed to improve the oral health and resulting overall health of all Floridians. Florida's Action for Dental Health is implemented in collaboration with like-minded groups seeking to achieve these goals.

OBJECTIVES

1. Promote attainable dental care for the uninsured and underserved in Florida.
2. Collaborate to maximize use and capacity of the current dental workforce to optimally serve Floridians with preventive and therapeutic dental care.
3. Expand opportunities for public health dentistry to serve Floridians.
4. Educate the public on and protect Floridians from the risks affiliated with utilizing and accessing dental care through alternative methods that do not involve seeing a dentist.

STRATEGIES

1. Promote attainable dental care for the uninsured and underserved in Florida.
 - Develop partnerships with other entities that serve patients who need a dental home (physicians, hospitals, nursing homes, county health departments, federally qualified health centers, advocacy and stakeholder groups).
 - Connect patients needing care with a dental team in an appropriate facility and support a reimbursement process to cover the cost of care.
 - Increase the effectiveness of the Medicaid dental program in providing preventive care and treatment.
 - Develop and implement an elder care protocol for dental care, focusing on caregiver education.
 - Secure state funding for coordinators to match special needs and medically compromised patients with volunteer dentists through the Dental Lifeline Network (Donated Dental Services).
 - Support initiatives focused on providing dental care services to veterans and other underserved populations.
2. Collaborate to maximize use and capacity of the current dental workforce to optimally serve Floridians with preventive and therapeutic dental care.
 - Increase use of private practices, educational institutions, and state and federally supported dental programs with capacity to treat patients.
 - Develop mechanisms for dental team members to establish dental care programs/facilities in underserved, rural areas of Florida.
 - Establish Community Dental Health Coordinator (CDHC) education programs at dental, dental assisting and dental hygiene schools in Florida and incorporate CDHCs into the dental team.

- Provide more preventive care by expanding dental assistant duties allowed under general supervision in all settings.
- Allow for more efficient delivery of dental care by expanding auxiliary duties to include placement and finishing of restorations (with proper training and certification).
- Recruit and assist in dental lab technicians' education.
- Support and expand preventive oral care in pediatricians' offices.
- Support and expand the volunteer safety net programs, including FDA-supported *Project: Dentists Care* clinics and *Mission of Mercy* programs.
- Establish and expand emergency room diversion programs for definitive treatment.
- Optimize dental care in nursing homes.
- Support nonrestorative treatments for carious lesions (tooth decay).
- Educate emergency room and nursing home facility staff on available resources for definitive treatment and establish referral lists of local dentists.

3. Expand opportunities for public health dentistry to serve Floridians.

- Establish and adequately fund a dental student loan repayment program.
- Require oral health education in schools and public assistance programs.
- Expand funding for county health department dental programs.
- Increase state supported funding for community water fluoridation.
- Increase Medicaid dental reimbursement rates and require 85/15 medical loss ratio for dental care in managed care programs.
- Expand public/private partnerships with federally qualified community health centers using private practice providers.
- Promote the Health Access Dental License to increase the number of providers in health access settings.
- Support initiatives that help increase access to dental care in remote and rural areas around the state through teledentistry.

4. Educate the public on and protect Floridians from the risks affiliated with utilizing and accessing dental care through alternative methods that do not involve seeing a dentist.

- Increase public awareness on the impact do-it-yourself dentistry (dental treatments without consultation from a licensed dentist) could have on one's oral health and overall health which could include infections, tooth loss, gum disease, jaw problems and bite problems.

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- Dr. Jim Antoon
- Dr. Terry Buckenheimer
- Dr. Chris Bulnes
- Dr. Bill D'Aiuto
- Dr. George Kolos
- Dr. Jolene Paramore
- Dr. Mike Eggnatz, Consultant
- Dr. CJ Henley, Consultant
- Dr. Rick Huot, Consultant
- Dr. Rudy Liddell, Consultant

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- Dr. Nolan Allen, Chair
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- Dr. Don Ilkka
- Mr. Bob Macdonald
- Dr. Cesar Sabates
- Dr. Rick Stevenson



CONTACT:

Joe Anne Hart, *Governmental Affairs Office* ● jahart@floridadental.org
Drew Eason, MA, *CAE, Executive Director* ● deason@floridadental.org
118 E. Jefferson St. ● Tallahassee, FL 32301 ● 850.224.1089
floridadental.org ● dentalhealthfl.org