



**STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**
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BILL LEE
GOVERNOR

LISA PIERCEY, MD, MBA, FAAP
COMMISSIONER

March 1, 2021

The Honorable Bill Lee, Governor
Tennessee State Capitol
Nashville, TN 37243-0001

Dear Governor Lee:

The Department of Health is pleased to provide you a copy of the *Tennessee Department of Health's 2020 Annual Report on Oral Health Services*. In accordance with Tennessee Code Annotated 68-1-303(b), the Department shall submit an annual report to the Governor and the Tennessee State Dental Association regarding the oral health services provided to Tennesseans.

The Department's commitment to protecting, promoting, and improving the oral health of people in Tennessee was actualized by the following provision of services:

- over 192,200 preventive sealants to over 30,980 at risk children in school and community settings
- more than 29,300 fluoride varnish applications to at risk children in health department settings
- over 8,300 silver diamine fluoride applications to over 2,000 at risk children in school and community settings
- more than 104,000 clinical dental services to over 13,400 individuals
- over 20,600 adult extractions and more than 5,900 dental cleanings were provided by grant recipients of the Uninsured Adult Health Care Safety-Net Program

Dental services during Fiscal Year 2020 were provided at a cost of \$13,307,812 of which \$7,395,291 were state dollars. During this period, a total of 89,059 unique individuals received 361,362 dental services through Tennessee Department of Health programs and grants.

If I can be of any additional assistance, please let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lisa Piercey".

Lisa Piercey, MD, MBA, FAAP
Commissioner



UPDATE ON ORAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Presented to
Governor Bill Lee
And
Tennessee Dental Association**

March 1, 2021

**Lisa Piercey, MD, MBA, FAAP
Commissioner**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The mission of the Tennessee Department of Health is to protect, promote, and improve the health and prosperity of people in Tennessee. Operating within this mission the Tennessee Department of Health's Oral Health Services strives to prevent and control oral diseases through organized community efforts. On approximately March 17, 2020, the duties of the Oral Health Services section were redirected to SARS-CoV-2 efforts. This had a significant impact on services provided during this time. The following information is an outline of those efforts during Fiscal Year 2020. The Tennessee Department of Health dental program expenditures for Fiscal Year 2020 were \$13,307,812 and are broken down by each program below.

Key Service Deliveries Fiscal Year 20

Oral Disease Prevention - Nurse's Fluoride Varnish Program

- An expenditure of \$146,930 (calculations based on an average of \$5.00 per application) provided 29,386 at risk children with oral health screenings, referrals, and fluoride varnish applications by Public Health Nurses in Tennessee Department of Health medical clinics.

School-Based Dental Prevention Project (SBDPP)

- An expenditure of \$5,491,650.86 provided 38,693 at risk children with dental screenings or dental exams, 109,152 with oral health education, 2,020 children received 8,306 Silver Diamine Fluoride treatments, and 30,981 children received 192,280 sealants in 409 schools and 116 community projects at an average cost of \$23.34 per sealant.

Public Health Dental Clinical Facilities

- An expenditure of \$7,183,247 provided 9,707 children with 14,189 dental visits and 3,694 adults with 6,138 visits to the 28 staffed Department of Health dental clinics. A total of 13,401 individuals made 20,327 patient visits receiving 104,016 dental services (77,835 to children) at an average cost of \$70.00 per service.

State Oral Health Plan

- Plan updates for this fiscal year includes the Tennessee Oral Health Data source grid, a nine-page document that provides information and instructions for accessing oral health resources at the state and national level. The Dental Care for Tennesseans map was updated. The annual update for the State Oral Health Plan was delivered to the plan's stakeholders in September of 2020.

Adult Dental Funding Program

- An expenditure of \$184,172* provided 20,619 dental extractions and 5,940 dental cleanings, and 815 telemedicine services at an average cost of \$6.73 per service. The grants were awarded by the Department's emergency dental services for adults.¹

Distribution of Information

- The Department of Health distributed traditional paper literature covering a broad range of oral health information to other agencies and the general public. The Department has an Oral Health Services website to provide information to public health professionals, parents, community leaders, and the general public.
- Oral Health Services worked with Finance and Administration to provide information on dental resources for the MyTN app. MyTN is a mobile application providing personalized service delivery to Tennesseans through technology solutions.

*Expenditure total reported by Finance and Administration.

¹ Statement of compliance with 2012 Tenn. Pub. Acts, ch. 1061 (the "Eligibility Verification for Entitlements Act" as required by Tenn. Code Ann. § 4-57-106(b). The Tennessee Department of Health, including local health departments, boards and commissions, has implemented protocols and policies to verify that every adult applicant for "public benefits" is a United States citizen or a "qualified alien," within the meaning of Chapter 1061.

ORAL HEALTH SERVICES DURING SARS-CoV-2

The introduction of SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) during this fiscal year lead to emergency government actions to limit the spread of the disease. On March 17, 2020, the Tennessee Department of Health (TDH) Oral Health Services Dental Clinics began limiting dental procedures to emergency services only. During this time, TDH dental patients were assessed and triaged for emergent and/or urgent dental treatment as needed. On March 23, 2020, the Governor signed Executive Order Number 18, limiting oral health services to only emergency procedures throughout the state. The TDH Clinical and School-Based Dental Prevention Program staff began to assist with statewide COVID-19 efforts. These efforts included, but were not limited to contact tracing, contact monitoring, call center, testing assisting, data entry, data verification, lab report assistance, test site assistance, and supply distribution. This shift in public health priorities, resulted in decreased dental services in the nurse's fluoride varnish applications, dental clinical procedures, and school-based dental services. Non-emergency dental services were suspended across the state until May 6, 2020 when Executive Order Number 31 ceased.

Summary of COVID-19 Efforts

Oral Health Services Staff Classification	Percentage of Efforts (March 17-June 30, 2020)
Clinical Staff	70%
School Based Dental Prevention Program Staff	90%
Central Office Staff	50%

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF SERVICES

This report is provided in response to Tennessee Code Annotated 68-1-303(b), which requires the Commissioner of Health to provide an annual report to the Governor and the Tennessee State Dental Association (TDA) on the work done by and under the Commissioner in regards to distribution of literature throughout the state to inform the population of the “proper way to care for teeth”.

Tooth decay continues to remain a threat to oral health across the lifespan. It directly impacts every aspect of our daily lives, employment status, school attendance, eating and speaking. Tooth decay is one of the most common chronic conditions in the United States. The mission of the Department of Health is to protect, promote, and improve the health and prosperity of people in Tennessee. In advancement of this goal, the Department’s Oral Health Services Section (OHS) operates on the fundamental principles of preventing and controlling oral diseases through organized community efforts. Statewide school-based dental programs continue to offer high-risk populations preventive services to include oral health education, sealants, silver diamine fluoride and screenings to identify children with unmet dental needs, referrals for these children, and follow-up on those children with urgent needs. Comprehensive dental services for children and emergency dental care to adults, unable to access care in the private system, are provided in fixed facilities located in rural health departments statewide. To improve access to dental services for high risk children in underserved areas, the Tennessee Department of Health partners with local school systems to offer a School Transport Program. The local school system transports target population children to local health department dental clinics, which provide comprehensive dental services. Three clinical sites have partnered with area dental colleges, Meharry Medical College and the University of Tennessee Health Science Center, where fourth year dental students rotate through the clinic and help provide comprehensive dental services to a targeted adult population.

Summary of Dental Services

Program	Number Served	Number of Services
Nurse’s Fluoride Varnish Program	29,386	29,386
School Based Dental Prevention Program (Sealants)	30,981 (children)	192,280 (teeth sealed)
School Based Dental Prevention Program (SDF)	2,020 (children)	8,306 (SDF applications)
Public Health Rural Dental Clinical Program	13,401 (9,707 children)	104,016 (77,835 to children)
Adult Dental Funding Program	13,271	27,374
Total	89,059	361,362

ORAL HEALTH SERVICES

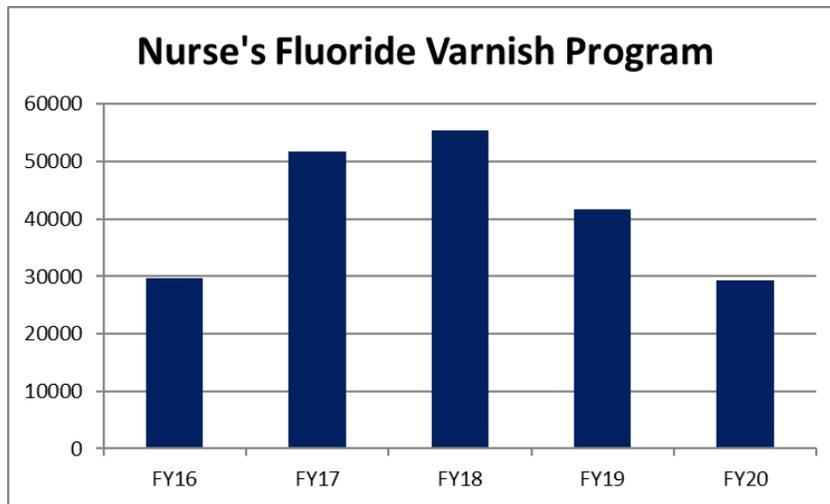
A. Oral Disease Prevention

1. Nurse's Fluoride Varnish Program

Tennessee Code Annotated § 63-5-109(14) allows Public Health Nurses to apply fluoride varnish to at risk underserved persons in public health clinics.

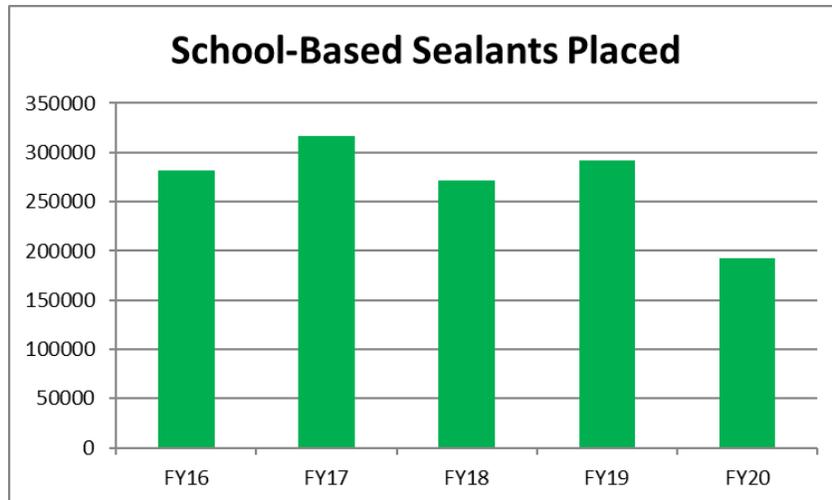
The Nurse's Fluoride Varnish Program targets children 0-5 years of age being seen in health department medical clinics. Nursing staff screen these children and refer them to dental providers in addition to applying fluoride varnish.

During Fiscal Year 2020, 29,386 (21,435 were 0-5 years of age) at risk children were screened, referred, and had fluoride varnish applied by nursing staff in Tennessee Department of Health medical clinics.



2. School-Based Dental Prevention Program (SBDPP)

This program is a statewide comprehensive preventive program involving dental screenings, referrals and follow-up for dental care, oral hygiene education, silver diamine fluoride, fluoride varnish, and sealants. SBDPP targets children in grades K-8 in schools with 50% or more free and reduced lunch programs. During Fiscal Year 2020, 38,693 children received dental screenings or a dental examination, 109,152 received oral health education, 2,020 children received 8,306 Silver Diamine Fluoride treatments, and 192,280 sealants were placed on 30,981 children in 265 schools and 69 community projects. During Fiscal Year 2020 the School Based Dental staff referred 9,931 high priority children with unmet dental needs for follow-up.



3. *State Oral Health Plan*

This summary is provided in response to Tennessee Code Annotated 68-1-305 which established the state’s first comprehensive oral health plan. The Tennessee State Oral Health Plan frames the issues of dental disease while focusing on four overarching areas to address and improve oral health: 1) Monitoring Disease in Tennessee, 2) Oral Health Education & Advocacy, 3) Prevention, and 4) Oral Health Resources & Workforce. Each one of these four areas have up to five recommendations that work towards improving oral health for Tennesseans. The Oral Health Plan is reviewed, and its progress shared annually with the plan’s stakeholders during the month of September. The entire plan continues to be broadly distributed throughout the state and can be accessed from the department’s website at

<https://www.tn.gov/health/health-program-areas/oralhealth/state-oral-health-plan.html>.

During Fiscal Year 2020 the Tennessee Oral Health Data source grid was made available to the public. The data source grid provides information and instructions for accessing resources for dental care, preventive services, and various surveillance systems at the state and national level. The oral health grid is located on the department’s website at

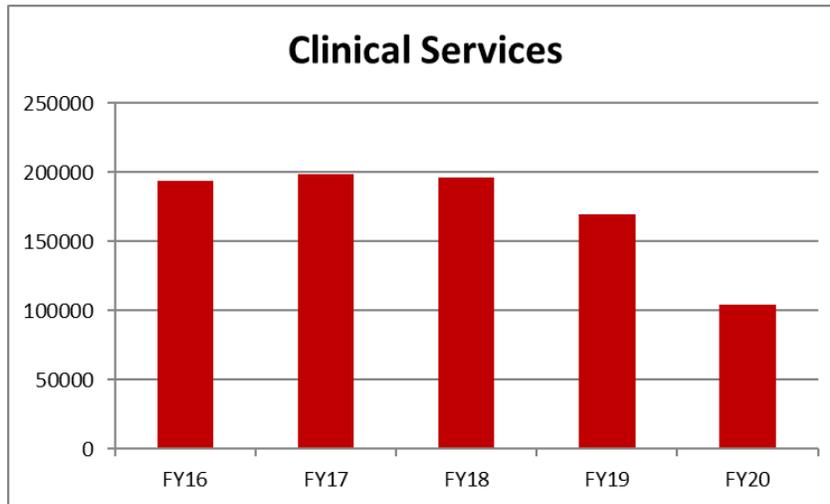
<https://www.tn.gov/health/health-program-areas/oralhealth/state-oral-health-plan/oral-health-resources-and-workforce-updates/oral-health-data-resources.html>

The interactive dental care for Tennesseans map was updated. The map is located on the website at <https://www.tn.gov/health/health-program-areas/oralhealth/dental-care-for-tennesseans.html>

B. Dental Services

1. *Public Health Dental Clinical Facilities*

The Department of Health offers comprehensive dental services to children and emergency care to adults on a sliding fee scale according to income. Dental services are available at the 28 staffed local health department clinics located in rural counties as well as one regional office. Dental services are typically offered from one to five days per week. During Fiscal Year 2020, 9,707 children made 14,189 visits to dental clinics and 3,694 adults made 6,138 visits. Throughout Fiscal Year 2020, 13,401 individuals made 20,327 patient visits receiving 104,016 dental services within the Department of Health dental clinics.



2. *Dental Transport Programs*

In an effort to improve access to dental services for high risk children in underserved areas, the Tennessee Department of Health partners with local school systems to offer a School Transport Program. The local school system transports target population children to local health department dental clinics, which provide comprehensive dental services. During Fiscal Year 2020 the School Transport Program provided dental services to 1,041 patients.

3. *Adult Dental Funding Program*

In Fiscal Year 2020, the Department provided funding for 20,619 dental extractions, 5,940 dental cleanings, and 815 telemedicine services. Due to COVID-19, in Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 the agency accepted telemedicine as a service delivery method. The grants were awarded by the Department's emergency dental services for adults².

² Statement of compliance with 2012 Tenn. Pub. Acts, ch. 1061 (the "Eligibility Verification for Entitlements Act" as required by Tenn. Code Ann. § 4-57-106(b)). The Tennessee Department of Health, including local health departments, boards and commissions, has implemented protocols and policies to verify that every adult applicant for "public benefits" is a United States citizen or a "qualified alien," within the meaning of Chapter 1061.

4. *Distribution of Information*

The Department of Health's website includes an Oral Health Services site that provides a broad range of information to public health professionals, parents, community leaders, and the general public. The website address for Oral Health Services is <https://www.tn.gov/health/health-program-areas/oralhealth.html>.

Staff in all the Department's dental programs distribute literature and educational information to individuals served. This information addresses a wide variety of preventive dental topics such as the importance of oral health and proper oral hygiene techniques. Requests for oral health information from agencies and the public are addressed by staff at the local, regional and the central office levels.

Oral Health Services worked with Finance and Administration to provide information on dental resources for the MyTN app. MyTN is a mobile application providing personalized service delivery to Tennesseans through technology solutions. The website with information regarding MyTN is <https://www.tn.gov/health/health-program-areas/oralhealth/dental-care-for-tennesseans.html>.